

XTRO'S MONSTER: A BIT OF ALIEN HERE ON EARTH

Rod Serling's

DECEMBER 1982/\$2

THE TWILIGHT ZONE

NEW JOURNEYS OF THE IMAGINATION
AND ALWAYS THE UNEXPECTED

Magazine

Vengeance in Miniature

'LIVING DOLL'

A Shocker From 'The Twilight Zone'

by Charles Beaumont

TZ Interview:

Blade Runner's Ridley Scott
Looks Back... to the Future

EIGHT GREAT STORIES

including

'The Shrine'

by Pamela Sargent

Photo Tour:

MAGIC FOR SALE

Gahan Wilson
on Movies

Profile:

Master of the Macabre
L. P. Hartley

New Horror Quiz!

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Rod Serling's
THE TWILIGHT ZONE
 Magazine

FICTION

December 1982

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Cover art by David Christiana



The first time . . .

They say you always remember the first time. (Some people can even remember the first time they heard that phrase.) And writers, however disastrous or comical or wonderful their *other* first times turn out, have a first time that's unique to them: the first sale. "It's an incredible event," Rod Serling recalled in an interview reprinted in April's TZ. "For the very first time in your life, something written has proven value, because somebody has given you money for the words that you've written . . . It's a tremendous boon to the ego, to your sense of self-reliance, to your feeling about your own talent. I remember the first sale I made was a hundred and fifty dollars for a radio script, and as poor as I was, I didn't cash the check for three months. I kept showing it to people."

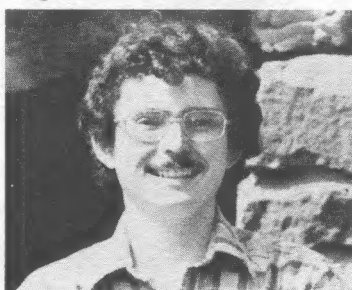
PAMELA SARGENT—who, with half a dozen novels behind her, is making her third appearance in TZ—had a similar experience when, at the start of her career, she sent a story to *The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction*. "I nearly died when a couple of months later I went out to my mailbox and found a check and contract—the first I'd ever received for a piece of writing," she told an interviewer in a recent *Fantasy Newsletter*. "I nearly went crazy trying to find someone to share the news with—almost everyone I knew was out of town. I recall having to toast myself in solitude with a bottle of beer."

Though our own procedure's somewhat different (we wait until the contract's signed, then send the check), over the past twenty months *Twilight Zone* has meant a "first sale" for more than its share of new writers—at least thirty of them, by my count, including the three prize-winners in TZ's annual writing contest. Despite a certain vague apprehension one occasionally feels at the sight of a five-foot-tall slush pile, we remain committed to publishing newcomers' work; in fact, it's one of the nicest things about being an editor.

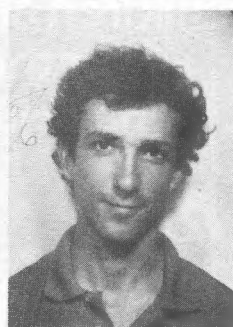
You'll find some good examples in this issue—stories such as



Sargent



Wolfe



Shifren



Charbonneau



Kovary

Jockeying for Time by **DAVID SHIFREN**, who reviews movies for the trade publication *Film Journal*. Like Pamela Sargent's *The Shrine*, it seems precisely the sort of contemporary human-centered fantasy that TZ was created for.

We have another first-timer in **SANDRÉ CHARBONNEAU**, though she, too, has been a reviewer (of books and theater) in her native Houston. She also hosts a chat show for a local cable company, and recently appeared on stage with her husband in *Play It Again, Sam*. "They say writers use their work as therapy," she reports, "and *Creative Writing* is proof of that. I started it one evening in an attempt to keep from murdering my husband, Mr. Clean. It worked."

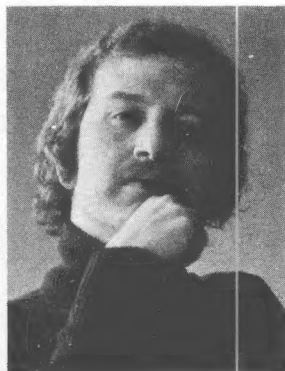
MORT CASTLE, on the other hand, is a veteran with so many stories to his name—in addition to poetry, cartoon gags, and radio scripts—that he's recently authored *Fiction for the Fellows: Writing Stories for Men's Magazines*. He must know something, because he's sold work to *Cavalier*, *True Story*, *Dude*, *Gent*, *Dapper*, *Sir!*, and dozens of other magazines that ought to have exclamation points after their titles, even if they don't. *Altenmoor*, *Where the Dogs Dance*—a very different sort of story—won a fiction award in last year's *Writers Digest* writing contest.

JOHN DAVID SIDLEY works for the p.r. department of Cleveland's University Hospitals. Besides writing fiction, he's also a

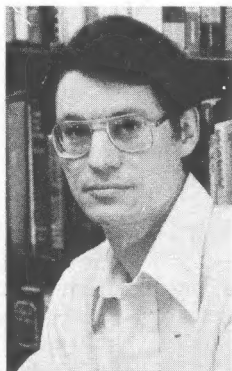
professional joke writer. Odd, when you think of it, how this issue's two most touching stories—Sidley's *The Translator* and Castle's *Altenmoor*—were both written by gag writers . . . while the comic piece, *Three Timely Tales*, is the work of **RICK NORWOOD**, who teaches math at Lehigh. In May's TZ, Norwood spoofed those grim realities, *Death and Taxes*. Now he's turned his sights on History with a trio of inventive vignettes in the manner of Reginald Bretnor's celebrated "Ferdinand Feghoot" series.

CHARLES BEAUMONT (1929-1967) was one of the most formidable talents ever to write for *The Twilight Zone*, though in the work he produced toward the end of his life—as in this issue's *Living Doll*—it's important to acknowledge the significant contribution of fellow writer Jerry Sohl. Beaumont's screen credits include *The Masque of the Red Death*, *The Seven Faces of Dr. Lao*, and *Burn, Witch, Burn* (with Richard Matheson). His short stories, including three that were the bases for *Twilight Zone* episodes, have been collected in the long-awaited *Best of Beaumont*, due next month from Bantam. It has an original introduction, "Beaumont Remembered," by Ray Bradbury.

RON WOLFE's "Tiger of the Mind" scared readers of our August '81 issue (which is now—to complete the animal conceit—as scarce as hen's teeth). A feature writer and cartoonist for the *Tulsa Tribune*, he recently co-authored a horror novel,



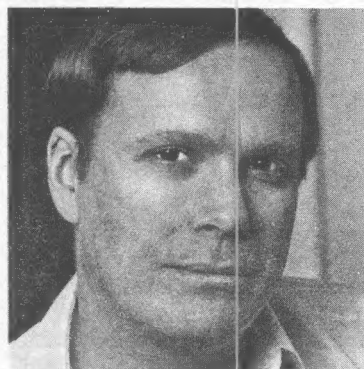
Castle



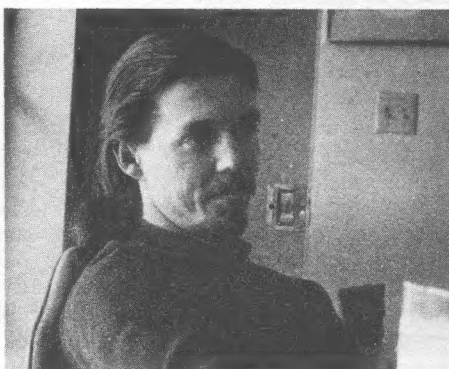
Sidley



Beaumont



Sullivan



Schow

Old Fears, and has now added humor to the horror in *What Really Happened to Uncle Chuckles?*

Another newspaperman, **MATHEW KOVARY**, explored the city's occult scene for us with camera in hand, emerging unscathed and unhexed. Born and raised in Greenwich Village, Kovary spent three years with the *Daily News* and now works as a New York court reporter.

Because we're featuring **JACK SULLIVAN**'s insightful examination of L. P. Hartley in this issue, complete with Hartley's classic horror tale *W. S.*, I thought it might be fun to include *Pulpmeister*, a Perelmanesque fantasy on the same theme by **DAVID SCHOW**. It offers, among other pleasures, an amusing picture of modern-day Grub Street, and Schow clearly knows whereof he speaks. "I spent a goodly chunk of 1981," he says, "writing six violence novels under a pseudonym, more or less exactly as described. Both the series and the publisher shall remain nameless." He'll also be contributing, in future issues, a four-part series on *The Outer Limits* ... just as soon as **MARC SCOTT ZICREE**'s *Twilight Zone* guide runs its course. Those of you who've missed any part of it, or are simply in the mood for more, should immediately arm yourselves with a copy of his *Twilight Zone Companion*, published by Bantam.

Incidentally, Marc phoned the other day to point out a printer's error in our October issue: the

photo of *Probe 7—Over and Out* was switched with the one from *The 7th Is Made Up of Phantoms*. Get out those red pencils!

And while you're at it, add Kevin Kelly's name below last month's "Spook Man" illo, which somehow appeared uncredited.

Speaking of errata ... Throngs of irate readers (and there's no reader quite so irate as an irate *Twilight Zone* reader) have already been inundating us with hate mail over the erroneous answer to quotation #9 in Chet Williamson's recent TZ Quiz. For God's sake, don't blame poor old Chet; he's perfectly innocent, and has a family to support. Blame—well, blame Reagan, if you like. Or the Russians. Somehow, the quotation—"It still held its Dr. Harper mask in one rotted, spade-claw hand."—was misidentified as the final line from Ramsey Campbell's "The Room in the Castle." Hah! *No way!* As our readers were so disagreeably quick to point out, the quote actually comes from Stephen King's "The Boogeyman," while as any child in school can tell you, Ramsey's story in fact ends with the equally juicy line, "For the snake-like thing that had reached for me, that thing as wide as a human body and impossibly long, had been merely the face-tentacle of the abomination Byatis." In the future, we'll try to keep our spade-claw hands separate from our face-tentacles.

—TK

Rod Serling's The **TWILIGHT ZONE** MAGAZINE

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Screen

by Gahan Wilson

Tron

(Walt Disney Productions)
Directed by Steven Lisberger
Screenplay by Steven Lisberger
Story by Steven Lisberger
and Bonnie MacBird

There seems to be a kind of curse on the Walt Disney Organization; some sort of almost supernatural blight appears to haunt its best efforts. Has some dark angel drawn a magic circle of limitation round the studios at Burbank, or has God Himself declared a ceiling on their achievement?

Logically, Walt Disney Productions should have long ago taken over the United States and be well on its way toward the conquest of the world. Disneyland and Walt Disney World were clear indications that an unstoppable force had appeared. They were, and are, positively brilliant sociological monstrosities. No previous dictatorship in the history of our planet had ever succeeded in developing anything like them: communities that, by their very structure, render passive vast crowds of divergent humanity, and make them obey without question, nay, with a great deal of *enjoyment*, almost any command given them by underlings.

Observe the wonderful confusion of images the Land and the World have accomplished by skilled manipulations of our psychic substructures: how the small town image is ruthlessly spread over a vast bank of mercilessly designed shops, each one more entrapping than the last, so that the buyer is progressively programmed and in the end *must* purchase *something*. *Nobody* gets out of the World or the Land without purchasing *something*, never mind the many, many tickets. See how Mickey and Donald, and all those so dear to our hearts who never were, are brutally employed as combination police and pitchmen, and note how pleased everyone

present is to be so controlled and so bullied.

One time visiting the Land, my wife, who is among other things a travel writer and therefore skillful at this sort of observation, made the mistake of spotting where the head of the next line would be formed (there are, of course, endless numbers of endless lines formed constantly in both the Land and the World), and we worked our way easily through the aimlessly shuffling, scientifically hypnotized crowd, to stand, somewhat smugly, on that spot. Soon, when more obvious clues had been presented, the others formed dutifully behind us, and we found ourselves standing at the leader position of the longest and most heavily populated line we'd experienced all day, and felt ourselves to be very clever indeed.

As soon, however, as the girl guide appeared, we both realized we might have been just a little too clever, for as she surveyed us all with the ill-hidden annoyance so typical of Land and World girl guides, we felt the first gentle pressure of the mob behind our backs. There were an *awful* lot of people back there, and they were almost all in an irresponsible trance state, and they were pathetically anxious to move ahead in order to please the girl guide when she gave the command, and we, being in front, were in their way, so to speak.

"As soon as I tell you to, and *not before*," the girl guide told us, "You will move down this corridor, *quickly!*"

Though we both fought it, my wife and I found ourselves nodding dutifully, and knew the huge group of humankind behind us—I estimated their combined weight at something over, say, ten tons—had done the same.

"You will move when I say *now*," said the girl guide.

The pressure behind us increased ominously and I felt warm, heavy breathing on the back of my neck. I glanced back to see the eyes of both a large man in a flowered shirt and the large child he carried on his shoulders bulge and glisten dangerously, and my wife and I grasped each other's hands.

"*Now!*" said the girl guide, and we all began heading down that

damned corridor, my wife and I at the lead, the ten-ton crowd pushing from behind. I felt the toes of the child riding the heavy man digging into my shoulders, and when we increased our pace the crowd, of course, did the same, but it was not happy, it wanted to go faster, and it did, and so did we, and so on until the whole great, heavy, clumping pack of us was practically jogging along and I thought, *My God, if we trip we're done for!* And I had a sudden, horrid vision and clarification which seared me then and sears me now, and I knew why people go into showers even though they know they're gas chambers, and why they allow themselves to be marched into desolate fields with open, waiting trenches: it's just that there simply isn't anything else they can *do!* They have to because everyone else is doing it, and, by the awful circumstance which is the heart and core of fascism, they've been reduced to being only a part of everyone.

So I have nothing but the most enormous respect and the deepest appreciation of the powers of the Land and the World, and find it odd, if fortunate, that they have not, working in from sunny Florida and sunny California, respectively, absorbed all the other states. I do wonder sometimes if there is, indeed, a kind of holding curse against the Walt Disney people.

Take *Tron*, for instance, their latest, most expensive movie, designed to break out of the perfectly satisfactory but limited children's market into the grown-ups' market, and to make lots and lots more money. The Walt Disney people are having a perfectly terrible time with *Tron*, and it almost doesn't seem fair. God knows they've done their homework; it isn't as if they lunged in and made a movie about just *anything*. After *Black Hole*, which was a financially unfortunate attempt to show George Lucas how to go about making a space fantasy, they must have felt their next foray had to be on really solid ground, and they looked about for something which was already a proven money maker, something already recognizable and beloved which could be made the basis for a surefire box office smash, and they

thought they'd found it, and I can see *why* they'd thought they'd found it:

Video Arcade Games!!!

Is that it, or what? Is there anything new around that's making that kind of money? Look at the figures: Space Invaders, the biggest video arcade game around, okay? You know what it's pulling? *Six million goddam bucks a goddam year is what it's pulling, sweetheart!* That's *three times* what *Star Wars* pulls! **THREE FUCKING TIMES! SIX FUCKING MILLION DOLLARS!!!!!!** And the *spin-offs*—can you picture the spin-offs! Look, have Mattel make one of their Intellivision cartridges based on the goddam thing, alright? Have Bally Manufacturing make an actual arcade game based on the son of a bitch and push it in their 240 Aladdin's Castles across the whole goddam country! Are we going to be rich, or what? Now all we got to do is figure out some kind of a movie.

And there, friends, *there* is where they came a cropper. On the movie. They just couldn't quite figure out the movie. And so they have the Mattel cartridges and the Bally games and so on and so on, but it's all just kind of lying around. What went wrong?

Not the technical end of it, not that. There has never ever been such extensive and sophisticated use of computer-generated imagery in a film *ever*. And not just the simple sort of two dimensional computer-generated imagery Grandpaw and Grandmaw knew, but solid-looking, three-dimensional figures which spin and turn and otherwise move about convincingly over, around and on an equally convincing three-dimensional computer-generated landscape. No, technically *Tron* is a breakthrough and a wonder.

—And it's not the fault of the artwork, either. I might have a tiny quibble here and there over this style of landscape, or how much of the heroine's ear should peek out demurely from her futuristic cap, but, by and large, it's swell. The Solar Sailer with its butterfly wings, for example, is really great, and the way transistors spill out of the villain's head when he's hit is highly satisfactory, and I was very taken by the way the Light Cycles make

right-angle turns. No, the art's peachy.

The cast? Well . . . getting a little shaky. There's David Warner, who always works very hard and effectively on any role the fates deem to hand him. Almost impossible to beat him for consistent fiendishness. As with all the leads in *Tron*, he plays a double role: a tacky but effectively dishonest business executive, and an unpleasant fragment of a mean computer program, and if that last seems confusing, we are on to one

Morgan wears big glasses as a lady scientist and looks considerably cuter prancing about in her program *persona* and outfit, and Bruce Boxleitner may be the greatest thing since sliced bread, as they say on the Coast, but it doesn't come through in his double roles, one of which is the title one, i.e., *Tron*.

Outside of not seeming to know what to do about actors, the director, Steven Lisberger, does pretty good, by and large, handling the pacing and keeping a very nice gloss throughout. His main problem



"In their flesh and blood roles . . ." In Steven Lisberger's *Tron*, Jeff Bridges, Cindy Morgan, and Bruce Boxleitner star as three computer experts whose work leads them into a video-game universe.

of the flaws in the movie (but more of that later). Let us say, however, that Warner is quite good in both roles and gives his business executive a genuinely touching frailty without in any way reducing his dangerous nastiness, which is a typically subtle Warnerian touch to what might have been otherwise a rather ordinary cad.

The rest of the players are in no way up to snuff. Jeff Bridges, son of Lloyd and brother of Beau, is the hero, and he is either a type I just don't like, or he is playing a type I just don't like. Of course, most of his lines *are* stupid, and that brings us to another flaw in the film, but God knows asking actors to read stupid lines is nothing new in Hollywood, and many's the boyish type who's made his basic fortune by pulling it off in style. Barnard Hughes pretty much walks through his lovable old man double role, and I can't say I blame him. Cindy

in *Tron* seems to be that he keeps running up against the script, and that consistently brings him down. There is an irony there because it happens that the script is also by Steven Lisberger, and it makes you wonder if another problem might be that the whole thing is a Lisberger-Kushner Production, and to suspect, strongly, that it might be so.

As with the essential concept of riding in on the success of the video arcade games, the synopsis of *Tron* looks very solid, sweetheart. It's an up-to-date *Wizard of Oz*: first we have the real world, not Kansas this time, but the U.S. government's Lawrence Livermore Laboratory outside Oakland, California, known in the movie as ENCOM, a vast and sinister corporation rolling in on computer technology. ENCOM is populated by the actors mentioned above, and we get to know them in their flesh and blood roles, not as well as we got to know Bert Lahr

or Frank Morgan or Margaret Hamilton, but to know them. And then, *zzzaappp!!!*, not over the rainbow, but through the laser light to a weird and wonderful land which is ruled over by an evil Master Control Program instead of a wicked witch, and it all sounds pretty cute, doesn't it?

The problem, the basic misstep, is the failure to make believable, even for a tiny bit, the plausibility of the fantasy characters in *Tron's* Oz. The Scarecrow and the Tin Woodman and the Cowardly Lion are all ridiculous, no doubt of it, and they certainly would never ever turn up in the streets of Topeka, but they *are* believable. Generations of children wrote to them care of L. Frank Baum and confidently awaited answers, hundreds of thousands more look forward to the annual presentation of their adventures on tv, and I've not the tiniest doubt astronauts and their families will get all choked up orbiting Betelgeuse as they watch the Wizard give the Tin Man his heart.

Why are the fantasy folk in *Tron* so unsuccessful? It may be that the difficulty is that they are not "folk" at all, but programs, or, even more abstract, *parts* of programs. They are costumed, and very cleverly, to look as if they are full of circuitry, and they glow more or less brightly depending on the strength of the currents, but even there the designers have made a basic error because what they're giving us is not an imaginative analogue of a *program*, but of a *computer*. I can easily see why they did it—it is because there really isn't anything about a program you can *show*. Even the little green letters on the monitors or the accordion-folding sheets of readouts with all those little holes along the sides aren't programs. Programs are only involved instructions boiling down to endless lists of *yes's* and *no's*. That's it. That's all there is.

Even so, even though I haven't a notion how one might go about it, it's possible some sort of proper costume or gadget might have been devised (there is an animated dingus called The Bit which looks one way saying yes and another saying no, but it shows up only briefly, either because there really isn't too much you can do with such a thing, or



"... trying to avoid the Jiminy Cricket syndrome." Jeff Bridges looks askance at his frequent sidekick in the electronic world, a particle of computer-generated energy known as "The Bit."

because the Disney people were trying to avoid the Jiminy Cricket syndrome), but then what do you do when *Tron's* Dorothy—Jeff Bridges plays the Dorothy—enters the scene? How do you have these programs relate to a human being and vice versa?

It's in this area where the movie totally and completely goes askew, because its solution is to harken back to those dear old days of slavery, the high noon of the old-time colonial empires. The programs are, it turns out, just as human as you and I, even having sexes (though it turns out the girl program doesn't know how to kiss until she runs into Dorothy), except that they are, well, I'm trying to think of a polite way to say it but the hell with it—they are *inferior*, you know? The way slaves were seen on the old-time plantations, or the natives were regarded in India. That sort of thing. We all know what we're talking about here. We're talking about the days they called us *B'wana*, sweetheart. And it's all kind of a downer.

Another problem with these creatures is that, like all inferior races, it's very hard to tell one from the other. You can tell the *girl* program (there seems to be only one in all the land of *Tron*) on account of she's got an altogether different sort of torso and holds her hands up delicately when she runs, but you can't tell Tron from Ram from Crom, or at least I sure as hell couldn't. They all glow blue in the dark, baby.

So, having made the grievous mistake of putting the Munchkins in the lead roles, the creators of *Tron* have made it impossible for you to get particularly interested in what's going on. Who *cares* if one of them is killed and fades off into sparkling circuitry before vanishing altogether? Who gives much of a hoot if another falls through the floor and another runs his cycle into the wall?

So, in a most decisive way, all the amazing technology works against the film. The more fancy and distracting the special effects aspect of the race through the electronic maze, the more spectacular the computer-generated landscape surrounding the event, the more your attention and interest wander from the characters. It is all very pretty to watch, indeed it is, but because it is impossible to identify with the abstractions *Tron* makes of its characters—even Warner, chewing the computer-generated world around him to tatters in a desperate attempt to be at least visible, slowly turns into just another gimmick—you never find yourself participating in the slightest in any of the frantically continuous activity. You just sit there and watch it, wishing that it was an arcade game so you could at least *play* the silly thing.

Another point, not a small one, is the singular diminution of human beings by identifying them so closely, even if it is in a slave and master situation, with a computer program. I may have my faults, nay, I *do* have my faults, but I am not to be confused with Frogger or Donkey Kong or Pac-Man. Got that straight, Walt Disney Productions?

The highest philosophical moment in *Tron* is reached, I think, when Tron himself, confused and worried, turns to Dorothy and complains sadly that, so often, all his plans go astray. Tron shares this confidence with Dorothy because he has learned, to his astonishment, that Dorothy is not a mere program like himself, but a "user," which is his people's interesting name for a human.

Dorothy hears the program out, nods sagely, and explains that, hard though it may be to believe, even users' plans go awry sometimes, and Tron—a users' plan gone wrong if ever there was one—can only shake his head. 17

Books

Roundup time again. Tom Disch is taking a well-earned month's furlough from this column, leaving me with a number of books he either chose not to review or, more likely, never even saw because I stole them for myself as soon as they arrived in the office.

What do all the following titles have in common? *Think Fast*, *Chesterfield Supper Club*, *Court of Current Issues*, *Fireball Fun-for-All*, *Crisis*, and *The Clock*? Answer: They were all prime-time tv shows back in 1949. They're listed—along with such goodies as *Grindl*, *Max Liebman Presents*, and *Treasury Men in Action*—in **The Complete Directory to Prime Time Network TV Shows** by Tim Brooks and Earle Marsh (Ballantine, \$12.95), a hefty 1001-page paperback that covers evening shows from 1946 to the present, from *ABC Barn Dance* to *Zorro*. While the book is not going to settle every barroom dispute, nor answer every trivial question that kept you up all night gnawing your fingernails, it does reveal what Pinky Lee's real name was (Pincus Leff) and where Oliver J. Dragon of *Kukla, Fran & Ollie* was born (Vermont, where his parents ran the Dragon Retreat).

There's a great deal more on Pinky and the Kuklapolitan Players, as well as on such other favorites as *Tom Corbett*, *Super Circus*, and *The Cisco Kid*, in **Saturday Morning TV**



1950 Howdy Doody look-alike contest winner Billy Oltmann with his inspiration, from Gary H. Grossman's *Saturday Morning TV*.



A scene from the 1927 film *The Monkey Talks*, reproduced—along with 250 other rare photos—in *Mr. Monster's Movie Gold* by Forrest J. Ackerman (Donning, Norfolk, VA, \$12.95 pb). The stills from FJA's famous archives are fascinating, though his captions are even more eccentric than ever, repeatedly plugging the author's next collection of stills at the expense of this one.

by Gary H. Grossman (Dell, \$12.95 pb). It's an enjoyably detailed, compulsively readable history of the shows you no longer watch because they aren't on anymore, or because they're on so early in the evening that you can't get home in time to see them since you're grown up now and have to work, or because they're still on Saturday mornings when, let's face it, you'd rather stay in bed. The book is also chock full of terrific pictures, like the one we've reproduced here.

From age fifteen on, Robert E. Howard reportedly enjoyed things like this:

Three warriors linked shields together and went up, while others who had the long light spears of the foot soldiers pushed their weapons in advance of the three. "Well done!" laughed Sir Hugh. He stepped forward, and a spear tore through his cheek, grinding into the bone. His sword smote down the middle man of the three, and he leaped back. An ax clanged against his straining chest as he heaved up Durandal (his sword),

breaking the links of his mail. "Well struck!" he roared . . .

The above is from Harold Lamb's historical romance of the Crusades, *Durandal* (Donald M. Grant, West Kingston, RI, \$15), first published in the pulp *Adventure* in the 1920s. Personally, I found such stuff as charmless at fifteen as I do today; but if *Conan's* your meat, I suppose this will be, too. There are six handsome illustrations in color by Alicia Austin and George Barr.

Robert E. Howard was writing under a considerably different influence—that of Sax Rohmer—when he wrote the three stories collected in *Lord of the Dead* (Grant, \$15), one of them completed by Fred Blosser. These are tales of kidnappings, slugfests, and leering idols, of hooded figures who skulk out of alleys and an insidious Fu Manchu-like Oriental named Erlik Khan. Howard himself was apparently never very happy with his efforts in this genre, but to my mind

they're among the few genuinely readable things he wrote, largely because, for once, there's a minimum of the usual beefcake and empty-headed swordclankery, with the violence set, this time, against a civilized urban background. The book also sports a pleasantly nostalgic introduction by Robert E. Briney and ten illustrations by Duncan Eagleson.

Two other volumes from Grant exhibit pulp writing at its most colorful: *Scarlet Dream* by C. L. Moore (\$20), ten interplanetary adventures, all but one from *Weird Tales*, starring Ms. Moore's popular hero, Northwest Smith (perhaps the spiritual father of Indiana Jones), whom we first meet on Mars having a run-in with the Medusa in the classic "Shambleau" ("Strange sounds were common enough in the streets of Earth's latest colony on Mars—a raw, red little town where anything might happen, and very

"a narrative designed to maintain interest and keep the reader turning the pages." On these terms, both books succeed rather nicely.

On the other hand—as Jack Sullivan once pointed out in a review for the *Times*—there are "page-turners" of a very different sort, books so shallow and uninvolved that our attention wanders and we find ourselves flipping impatiently to the end. L. Sprague de Camp's *The Hand of Zei* (Owlswick Press, Philadelphia, \$20.50) is this sort of page-turner; though the illustrations by Edd Cartier promise good nostalgic fun, de Camp's colorless prose and stilted, exposition-filled dialogue are guaranteed to glaze the eyes of all but his most indiscriminating fans.

Owlswick has done everything right, though, in *A Dreamer's Tales* (\$12.75 hb), the second of its three collections by the Irish fantasist Lord

ivory. "Yann" has always seemed to me, along with Lovecraft's "Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath" (written under Dunsany's influence), the most perfect journey-narrative in all fantasy, and here it has the good fortune to be illustrated by Tim Kirk, whose work is featured in all three Owlswick collections. Kirk's humans have always been a bit cartoonish for my taste, but his line drawings of architecture—of castles, haunted mansions, ancient harbor towns, and London streets—are as good, in their way, as the work of Dunsany's original illustrator, Sidney Sime.

T. H. White's *The Once and Future King* is one of the classics of modern fantasy; he also wrote some memorable shorter fiction, a sampling of which was recently published by Putnam in *The Maharajah & Other Stories*, including his humorous yet terrifying masterpiece, "The Troll." (Tom Disch, in June's *TZ*, called it "an object lesson to anyone who aspires to write fantasy of hallucinatory believability.") A different side of White is on display in *England Have My Bones* (Putnam, \$13.95), based on a country diary the twenty-eight-year-old White kept in 1934. Like the curate's celebrated egg, the book is good only in parts. One comes across some wonderfully vivid descriptions of rural life, such as the birth of a colt, hauled out *à la Herriot* with a rope ("We fell over when he came out, a big foal. He lay there and shivered, all legs and hoofs, but with his head up in a new country, whilst Blossom shuddered. He had come, with his lizard face and unfocused eyes, from another world"), and some provocative observations on work ("One can get a lot of pleasure out of farming, if one isn't a farmer"), English tradition (a neighbor refers to an unmarked area in one of his fields as "the Nunnery," though "there is not a brick or a stone left to mark the spot where the holy chapel once stood"), outdoor dress ("There is only one general-purpose hat for the country, and this is the deer-stalker," because it protects the back of the neck from cold rain), the wisdom of bathing only once a fortnight ("If I am continually washing myself, quite apart from the dangerous and unsanitary nature

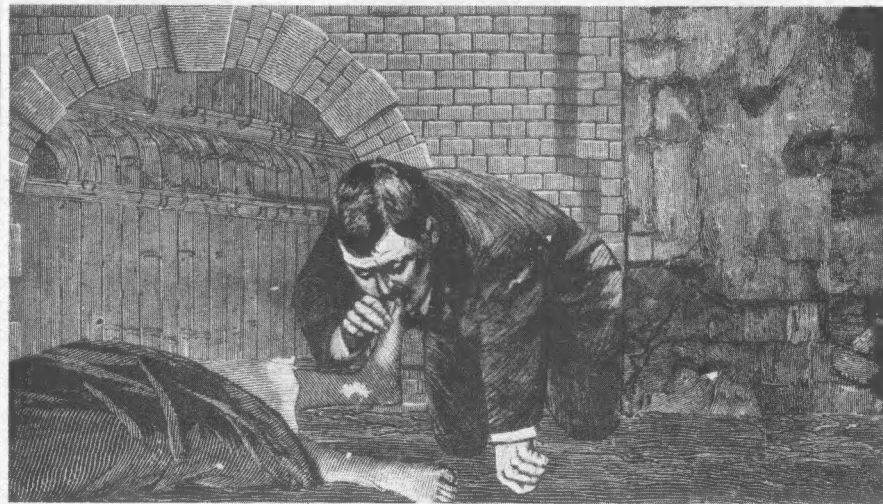


Illustration by Derek Pell from *True Tiny Tales of Terror* by Ann Hodgman (Perigee Books, NY, \$4.95 pb). The few hundred anecdotes collected here are reminiscent of the *National Lampoon's* "True Facts" at their most ghoulish: bizarre murders, medical anomalies, and the like. The gentleman above stalked the streets of 1799 London biting women's fingers and toes.

often did"); and *The Wonderful Lips of Thibong Linh* by Theodore Roscoe (\$15), three lively tales from *Argosy* and *Adventure* set in Palestine, voodoo-haunted Haiti, and (the title story) a Cambodia still patrolled by the French Foreign Legion. The Moore collection has ten color illustrations by Alicia Austin in the bland, coloring-book style she seems to favor; *Thibong Linh's* illustrations, with their fine period atmosphere, are by Stephen Gervais. In his introduction, Theodore Roscoe states the requirements of the genre:

Dunsany (1878-1957). This volume includes such rhapsodically beautiful sketches as "Poltarnees, Beholder of Ocean," "Bethmoora," and my own favorite of all the master's tales, "Idle Days on the Yann," a sort of dream-travelogue that takes us for a voyage on the sailing ship *Bird of the River* past such wondrous cities as Mandaroon, whose inhabitants remain perpetually asleep, knowing that when they wake the gods will die and men will dream no more, and Perdondaris, whose gigantic gate is carved from a single piece of



Illustration by Tim Kirk for *A Dreamer's Tales*.

of the practice, I shall cease to appreciate it"), the potential merits of adders as pets ("It would mean handling them with leather gloves in the angry early stages, and the moment when you changed from leather to bare hands might be exciting"), and the pleasures of risk-taking in general ("Sitting in the same chair rots one's soul. Decent men ought to break all their furniture every six months. Failing that, they ought to fly. The objective of an uncomfortable or perilous life is the enjoyment of comfort and safety in between"). Unfortunately, to reach such passages, one has to push through pages of tedious notations that never really transcend the diary form: the schedule of his daily flying lessons (White had developed a sudden passion for airplanes), the size and weight of every fish caught, the success, in numerical terms, of each day's hunting. These last two activities point up a puzzling aspect of the book: Among the most imaginative sections of *The Once and Future King* are those in which the young Arthur is

transformed by Merlyn, his tutor, into various animals, such as a perch and a wild goose. These scenes enable Arthur—and the reader—to empathize with these creatures. Yet in real life White delights in slaying them. He can feel some remorse after a day's fly-casting in Scotland ("I had qualms to-day. . . . Are fish really cold-blooded and more or less impervious to pain? . . . It is a bad thought that these lovely silver creatures are brought in, killed by an agony worse than toothache"), yet a few pages later he is reeling them in as before ("I pressed on him hard, in an agony of doubt for the first few seconds, in case he should go again"). There are also laments for a dead pet grass snake side by side with paeans to the joys of partridge hunting ("We had nine brace, including one young pheasant by mistake. . . . I don't know when I enjoyed a day more"). It's a little disconcerting, like learning that Beatrix Potter put aside her manuscript of *Peter Rabbit* to go off and shoot the rabbits raiding her cabbage patch.

—TK

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The 'Unhappy Is He' Quiz

Revisited

compiled by William Fulwiler

"Unhappy is he to whom the memories of childhood bring only fear and sadness." So reads the opening line of H. P. Lovecraft's "The Outsider." Here's another good beginning: "I am what I profess to be—a writer of weird fiction." That's from Robert Bloch's "The Shambler from the Stars"—and it also began the horror fiction quiz in *Twilight Zone's* September issue, in which you were asked to name the story and author of thirty opening lines from various weird classics.

Now here are another thirty beginnings, just as weird and just as classic. Those who guess ten or more correctly (that means getting both title and author right) should count themselves experts; those who guess twenty or more will go straight to heaven. (Answers on page 86.)



1. Having murdered my mother under circumstances of singular atrocity, I was arrested and put upon my trial, which lasted seven years.
2. I never knew any one so keenly alive to a joke as the king was.
3. The thing on the torture-rack began to moan.
4. Yar Ali squinted down the blue barrel of his Lee-Enfield, called devoutly on Allah and sent a bullet through the brain of a flying rider.
5. In Styria, we, though by no means magnificent people, inhabit a castle, or schloss.
6. "Unless they alter their course, and there's no reason why they should, they'll reach your plantation in two days at the latest."
7. It was a little after half-past nine when the man fell overboard.
8. In 1925 I went to Oklahoma looking for snake lore, and I came out with a fear of snakes that will last me the rest of my life.
9. It took me a long time to decide whether to let the earth live.
10. "I can assure you," said I, "that it will take a very tangible ghost to frighten me."
11. It's midnight. Before dawn they will find me and take me to a black cell where I shall languish interminably, while insatiable desires gnaw at my vitals and wither up my heart, till at last I become one with the dead that I love.
12. The coupe with the fishhooks welded to the fender shouldered up over the curb like the nose of a nightmare.
13. I was out with Blood, my dog.
14. "But, my dear," said Mrs. Culverin, with a tiny gasp, "you can't actually mean—a tail!"
15. Just when the idea occurred to her that she was being murdered she could not tell.
16. The Kanamit were not very pretty, it's true.
17. In the very olden time, there lived a semi-barbaric king, whose ideas, though somewhat polished and sharpened by the progressiveness of distant Latin neighbors, were still large, florid, and untrammelled, as became the half of him which was barbaric.
18. *Monday* This new creature with the long hair is a good deal in the way.
19. Georg Schmidt was not happy in his job as medical officer of the Rosenberg concentration camp.
20. Marley was dead, to begin with.
21. "Off there to the right—somewhere—is a large island," said Whitney. "It's rather a mystery—"
22. It goes past the powers of my pen to try to describe Reelfoot Lake for you so that you, reading this, will get the picture of it in your mind as I have it in mine.
23. It was a large cellar, entirely out of proportion to the house above it.
24. The most merciful thing in the world, I think, is the inability of the human mind to correlate all its contents.
25. It has become needful for me, who am no wielder of the stylus of bronze or the pen of calamus, and whose only proper tool is the long, double-handed sword, to indite this account of the curious and lamentable happenings which foreran the desertion of Commorion by its king and its people.
26. Conradin was ten years old, and the doctor had pronounced his professional opinion that the boy would not live another five years.
27. They would not let him alone.
28. When Thangobrinde the jeweller heard the ominous cough, he turned at once upon that narrow way.
29. East of Suez, some hold, the direct control of Providence ceases; Man being there handed over to the power of the Gods and Devils of Asia, and the Church of England Providence only exercising an occasional and modified supervision in the case of Englishmen.
30. Dr. Strauss says I shud rite down what I think and evrey thing that happens to me from now on. 17

From the twilight zone to 'Star Etc.

TZ AT THE BALL PARK: THE CASE OF THE ALL-PURPOSE METAPHOR

We've long had our suspicions about the baseball crowd—the players, the writers, and the fans. We've seen how, given the choice, they'll always prefer sports jargon to plain English. We've seen them grab hold of a cliché and squeeze every last drop of meaning out of it. We've seen baseball reporting become as routine and predictable as a batter adjusting his cap, poking at his groin, and hitching up his pants before stepping up to the plate. We've had our fill of "squeakers" and "hot corners" and "southpaws" and coaches who say, "We got ourselves a mighty fine ball club here."

And now a new bit of jargon seems to have been added to the baseball vocabulary—a phrase that, judging from the dozens of ways it's used, seems to mean anything and everything; a phrase that ... well, touches all the bases, you might say.

We mean, of course, "twilight zone."

Every week we get dozens of clippings attesting to the phrase's popularity. Here are just a few.

In a sense, it was a bittersweet occasion for Rose, the beginning of a long twilight zone of banging away at the ghost of Ty Cobb. Through June 27, he still needed 409 hits to catch Cobb (4,191), a quest that will carry him into at least the 1984 season

—*Sporting News*. Submitted by Chris Faulkner, Fort Madison, IA

LA finally wins game fit for 'Twilight Zone'

—Submitted by Duane Thelin, Edmonds, WA

Mets' loss to Braves right out of Twilight Zone

—*Staten Island Advance*. Submitted by Mark Paglikco, Staten Island, NY

Wrigley Field gets caught in Twilight Zone

—*Tulsa Tribune*. Submitted by Sandra Lembke, Tulsa, OK

Dodgers play Cubs into Twilight Zone

—*The Long Beach Press-Telegram*. Submitted by Tim Hanley, Norwalk, CA

Johnstone, 35 and perhaps nearing the twilight of his twilight zone, may not be able

—*San Jose Mercury*. Submitted by Steve Hyland, Cupertino, CA

It is almost as if Jim Lemon stepped out of the Twilight Zone and into the Twins clubhouse. Somehow, you expect to see Rod Serling, cigarette in hand, standing in front of the big guy's locker and saying, "We submit for your approval."

—*Minneapolis Tribune*. Submitted by Jim Hemesath, Huron, SD

"There are anesthetic ballplayers," he observed. "You watch them all year, and you say they are not contributing much to the team. Then they show you a lot of impressive statistics. They put you to sleep with statistics that don't win games. It is time to trade a player as soon as he reaches the twilight zone of stardom."

—baseball great Branch Rickey in *Rickey and Robinson* by Harvey Frommer (Macmillan, 1982). Submitted by Bill Knight, Peoria, IL

Finally, not to leave out you hoopsters ...

Welcome, Spanner, to the twilight zone



IF YOU ARE AT ALL interested in prep basketball and were around 30 years ago, you must remember the Spanner brothers and their coach, Virg Simpson. These brothers from Kalamazoo were so great they were the state high school basketball champions.

—*The Columbian*. Submitted by Virginia M. Marshall, Vancouver, WA

And where would football be without the end zone ... and the Twilight Zone?

Edmonton's victims, Ottawa Rough Riders, were dropped back to reality that was the Twilight Zone of a heroic, last-minute 26-23 loss to Edmonton in the 1981 championship CFL game.

In their initial meeting since that cliffhanger, the Eskimos displayed

—*Winnipeg Free Press*. Submitted by C. E. Carr, Thompson, Manitoba

Ridley Scott

'A Visual Person'

ABOUT TO EMBARK ON A 'MYTHOLOGICAL' FANTASY, THE ARTIST-TURNED-DIRECTOR TALKS ABOUT THE SECRET SOUNDS IN *ALIEN* AND THE VISION BEHIND *BLADE RUNNER*.

Interviewer **James Verniere** reports:

British director Ridley Scott is a filmmaker with the eye of a still photographer. His first two feature films, *The Duellists* (1978), based on a Joseph Conrad novella, and *Alien* (1980), from an original story by Dan O'Bannon, were visually stunning. If they had a common weakness, it was the insubstantiality of the characterizations.

Scott's cinematic strengths reflect his training at the Royal College of Arts. After graduating, he worked as a television set designer and director of such popular BBC series as *Z-Cars* before forming his own production company with his brother, filmmaker Tony Scott. In the ten years that followed, he worked on thousands of tv commercials, honing both his skill as a director and his notorious eye for detail.

His initial feature, *The Duellists*, was a lush evocation of the past starring Keith Carradine and Harvey Keitel as French hussar officers who fight a lifelong duel over a long-forgotten slight. Although the film opened to critical raves, and it won a Special Jury Prize at Cannes, it died at the box office. Scott blames the film's distributor for trying to promote it as an "art film." As Scott sees it, *The Duellists* is essentially an action-packed western in a nineteenth-century French setting, although he admits that the film's primary strength lies in its Turneresque visual compositions.

Alien gave Scott the opportunity to combine his art background with a science fiction format, and the result

"People ask, 'Why are your films so visual?' I say, 'Well, bloody hell, that's what movies are.'"



was box-office dynamite. A claustrophobic nightmare, *Alien* depicted a battle between the crew members of the interstellar spaceship *Nostromo* (note the Conrad reference) and an incredibly hostile nonhuman intruder. It proved a visceral, nail-biting experience of relentless intensity. Much of its impact can be credited to the artists Scott commissioned to create the film's visual effects and to design its sets and costumes—and, in particular, to the Swiss surrealist H. R. Giger, who designed the alien itself. Never before had so many artists worked together in such harmony on a genre film. The result was a classic of cinema dementia—though as with *The Duellists*, characters sometimes tended to be less important than the scenery.

In his third feature, *Blade Runner*, Scott offered another vision of the future, in some ways equally nightmarish. Set in twenty-first-century Los Angeles, it tells the story of a police detective named Rick Deckard (Harrison Ford, in an understated and underrated performance) whose assignment is to track down and "retire"—i.e., kill—four renegade Nexus 6 "replicants" (artificial humanoids). Based on the novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* by the late Philip K. Dick, *Blade Runner* is a hybrid. Scott and scenarists Hampton Fancher and David Peoples retained the paranoid/entropic theme of Dick's novel, but they added a new element: film noir, a cinematic style which combines a cynical detective protagonist, expressionistic use of light and shadow, doomed relationships, violence, and, most important, an urban setting. Indeed, the urban setting is the heart and soul of *Blade Runner*. With the considerable aid of special-effects expert Douglas Trumbull and visual consultant Syd Mead, Scott has created a techno-hell of towering buildings, neon signs, giant video billboards, and a cyclopean maze of pyramids, "retro-fitted" apartment houses, weird cars, and weirder people. Although the critics almost unanimously disagree, Scott believes that *Blade Runner* contains his strongest characterization to date.

The success of *Blade Runner* now behind him, Scott must once again play the "Can he top his last film?" game with his next project, a medieval romance tentatively titled *Legend of Darkness*.

TZ: Who originally approached you with the idea for *Blade Runner*?

Scott: The producer, Michael Deeley, whom I've known for a number of years. He had already taken up the project with Hampton Fancher.

TZ: What about the original script interested you?

Scott: The first time I read it I was interested in the combination of near future—which I've always found curious—and a real character.

TZ: Were you at all concerned about making another science fiction film right after *Alien*, concerned in the sense that you might pigeonhole yourself as a science fiction filmmaker?

Scott: That was the initial reaction, but I decided that worrying about being categorized was silly. Frankly, I find science fiction now covers such a huge ground that it's almost impossible to be categorized within it. I mean, I don't think *Blade Runner* is anything like *Alien*. In a funny kind of way, I feel as if *Blade Runner* is a contemporary movie. That was another thing that attracted me to *Blade Runner*. I felt I'd done one movie about the past and one about the future, and that this one would be about the present. In fact, I'm already thinking about other science fiction projects. I can't get off the subject now.

TZ: With a film as visually and aurally complex as *Blade Runner*, it is crucial that an audience see it at a theater that can do justice to the seventy-millimeter film stock and the Dolby sound.

Scott: Yes, it is crucial. Here in New York the Criterion theater has done it justice. I flew in before the screening to check out the theater, and from the management point of view the theater is brilliantly set up. [Scott made these remarks two weeks before *New York Times* critic Vincent Canby wrote a piece about how one show at the Criterion turned out to be a technical disaster.]

TZ: What about all the people who will see *Blade Runner* in tiny cinemas?

Scott: Well, the technology of the theaters is not up to the technology of filmmaking, and it can be very frustrating. You go to a great deal of trouble to make a film in every conceivable way, from the way it looks to the sound—everything. And then it's pumped out at a thousand theaters, and I'd say eighty percent of them are useless. So the film is then immediately watered down by fifty percent, because you're not getting sound or picture quality.

TZ: What vision of the future does *Blade Runner* offer?

Scott: I wanted to deliberately avoid the cliché of an austere future. Instead, I wanted to emphasize the sense of teeming masses. In fact, my yardstick was present-day Hong Kong. Of all the cities I've ever seen,



"My yardstick was present-day Hong Kong." *Blade Runner* Rick Deckard (Harrison Ford) takes aim at a fleeing replicant amid the teeming streets of twenty-first-century Los Angeles.

Ridley Scott

Hong Kong has stayed with me longest. It was a culture shock in every way. But it was so bloody interesting because it was multinational, multi-layered. It was rich even though it was dirty and smelly. I figured it was a vision of what the future city will be.

TZ: Is it accurate to describe you as a filmmaker with the eye of a still photographer?

Scott: Yeah, I mean if you're doing a period piece the best stuff to look at is the photographs or the work of the painters. So my research is always visual research. Painters or photographers.

TZ: Is *Blade Runner* meant to be a cautionary tale?

Scott: No, not at all. It is not a lecture. It is an entertainment, which quietly presents some of my concerns about the future. There is some fact in the film. We have reached the point where it is almost as expensive to tear down a structure as it is to build one, so the future will combine old and new architecture. The story also touches on, in a very romantic way, genetics. But essentially we're just asking, What if?

TZ: Certainly the film makes some predictions about the politics of the future.

Scott: Yes, there is the idea that corporations have taken control of world politics. That could happen. One of them might be Hitachi or Sony,



"He came across as a very dangerous character." Scott coaches Ford during *Blade Runner*'s climactic Bradbury Hotel battle.

him so soon after *Star Wars*.

TZ: But Ford's work in the *Star Wars* films and in *Raiders of the Lost Ark* does not indicate that he can

TZ: Have you read Philip K. Dick's novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep*?

Scott: Yes, and I found that it was so wonderfully complex that the final frustration was that if we tried to cover all that ground in a film, we'd end up with a three-hour movie.

TZ: What was Dick's original reaction to the script?

Scott: The first script that I was handed he apparently didn't like. We then spent nearly eight months during the preproduction restructuring the screenplay. I wanted for one to see more detection.

TZ: Am I right in believing that the first draft contained the more exploitative elements—the detective versus the androids from outer space—and that the second draft added the whole theme of the nature of being human?

Scott: Yes, in fact the first draft was almost entirely the battle with Roy Batty, and Batty was killed. But I found that I had great sympathy for the replicants' predicament. I think they had a genuine grievance, so I brought that back into it.

TZ: So Philip K. Dick was much hap-

"I wanted Harrison Ford to play Captain Dallas in Alien, but I didn't dare ask him so soon after Star Wars."

where they're not just involved in domestic electronics and armaments but also space and space research, which are no longer government programs but corporate programs.

TZ: Why did you choose to use Harrison Ford in this very nonheroic part?

Scott: To my way of thinking there was never any other choice. In fact, I wanted Harrison to play Captain Dallas in *Alien*, but I didn't dare ask

play this kind of existential, down-and-out detective.

Scott: I wasn't looking at those films when I made the choice in my mind. Harrison did a very interesting job as a supporting character in *The Conversation*, a film I like very much. He played an almost Kafkaesque figure in that. And I was thinking about his work in *Apocalypse Now*. It was a very small part, but he came across as a very dangerous character.

pier with the second draft.

Scott: Yes, he loved the second draft. Unfortunately, he never saw the film. But I did meet him when we ran all the effects for him, and he was knocked out. You see, we tried to retain some of the elements of the novel in the effects—by innuendo, in a sense. So those who've read the novel will recognize some of it in the imagery, and those who have not read the novel will not feel at a loss. It's all there visually. I'm a visual person. People ask, "Why are your films so visual?" I say, "Well, bloody hell, that's what I'm doing. That's what movies are." In fact, if anything, I believe in a minimum of dialogue and maximum picture.

TZ: The major criticism of *Alien* was that the visuals overwhelmed the characters.

Scott: Well, *Alien* was "Seven Little Indians." The screenplay had such thrust that it was irresistible from a director's point of view. In fact, by the time I got it, it had been in the hands of five other directors. It took me about three seconds to agree to

do it. But, then, I knew *how* to do it, how it should look.

TZ: Before we get off *Blade Runner*, is there any truth to the story that you once told Dick you couldn't finish the novel because it was too tough?

Scott: Uhhh, yes. Absolutely. Actually, I didn't say that to him, but he did take umbrage when he heard it. It was a tough novel to get through, but I did finally. And I liked Dick when I met him.

TZ: One important element of the novel that you did not include in the film is the idea that Deckard begins to suspect that he himself is a replicant.

Scott: You've hit a bone of contention here, because I loved that aspect of it. *Blade Runner* is a very paranoid film. In fact, I shot that layer of the story and we cut it out. It was a kind of general consensus that the way I had shot it was a bit arty. But what is arty? If arty means a complex detail, then why not have a complex detail and try the audience? I think audiences in this genre are very, very sophisticated.

What I had in the film involved Gaff, the man who makes origami. You have the paper chicken, the little stick figure, and finally the unicorn. In the shot we cut out, I showed Deckard sitting at his piano day-dreaming, and what he dreams of is a unicorn running through a forest. The idea was that the paper unicorn at the end was a hint that Deckard had an implanted memory and that the other detective knew his dreams and memories. So what Deckard thought was a private memory turned out to be a replicant memory.

TZ: But you cut out the dream sequence.

Scott: Yes, I gave in to the group.

TZ: Would you compare Syd Mead's work on *Blade Runner* to the work of H. R. Giger on *Alien*?

Scott: No, Giger was involved specifically with the creature itself and the alien environment. Other artists, including Jean Giraud ("Moebius"), who I think is one of the best comic strip artists in the world, worked on the rest of the film. Syd Mead eventually covered in broad



"Alien was 'Seven Little Indians.'" On the bridge of the *Nostromo*, doomed crew members Kane (John Hurt), Dallas (Tom Skerritt), and Ash (Ian Holm) plan their descent onto the uncharted planet in 1979's *Alien*.

Ridley Scott

"I found that I had great sympathy for the replicants' predicament."

strokes almost all of *Blade Runner*.

TZ: Speaking of Moebius, are you familiar with a strip he did that was written by Dan O'Bannon for *Heavy Metal* magazine called "The Long Tomorrow"? It seems that *Blade Runner* has a lot in common with that work.

Scott: *Heavy Metal* magazine is always an influence on me, and other publications like it. And I was influenced by the Moebius story. I even tried to hire him to work on the film but he was too busy.

TZ: Does your background in art serve you well as a film director?

Scott: Always, at all times, every day. In fact, my eldest son is going to take the same route. He's going to art school and he'll go to film school to do his postgraduate work. I was a

painter first, but I wasn't very good. I was a better illustrator. So I started to do illustration and graphics, which led to photography, which led to moving photography. So I found myself heading towards film.

TZ: Do you find yourself influenced by any of the artists you studied?

Scott: Oddly, the artist who influenced me most was a French illustrator called André Francois. I'm talking about poster work, advertising. I got very involved in advertising, which is really pure graphics, and that led me into commercials. Making commercials was my film school.

TZ: Was it the art background or the commercials that turned you into such a stickler for detail?

Scott: Both. Absolutely.

TZ: When did you get your first film

experience?

Scott: It was right after I'd spent six months in the U.S. on a scholarship. I went to work for a company called Bob Drew Associates, which was part of the Time/Life Corporation. The company made documentary films. I was a sub-sub-assistant, from getting sandwiches to, when I was allowed to, touching film, maybe trying to sync up some rushes. I went from there to the BBC as a production designer and/or art director. I directed one or two shows, and then went freelance. On the BBC I did a show called *Z Cars*, which was kind of like your *Naked City*.

TZ: You then formed your own company and made television commercials.

Scott: Put simply, yes. I made commercials with that company for twelve years. In fact, the company is still going. It's called RSA Limited.

TZ: As a filmmaker trying to sell a product, did you learn any techniques that you now use in feature films?



"... a minimum of dialogue and maximum picture." Swiss surrealist H.R. Giger designed Allen's organic-looking derelict spaceship, as well as the alien itself.



"This sounds like a Western . . ." In *The Duellists* (1978), Scott's first feature, Keith Carradine (left) and Harvey Keitel (right) play former Napoleonic officers, the one peaceable, the other a fanatic, who spend half their lives warring over an insignificant slight.

Scott: Yeah, you learn totally about communication and persuasion.

TZ: Did you use any of these insidious, persuasive techniques in *Alien* to scare your audience to death?

Scott: Sure, a good sound dub can add a whole other dimension. You have this argument with the rating board frequently. If a film is on the edge of an R or PG rating, a heavy dub, a clever dub, can push it over.

TZ: How do you mean a clever dub?

Scott: I think a dub can creep into people's senses and lay in the idea of anticipating, for example, something awful or dreadful. That's the whole value of good film scoring. And it's becoming more and more sophisticated. You can do it with sound. It might have nothing to do with the music.

TZ: Can you give me an example from *Alien*?

Scott: Yeah, we had a very good sound editor on that named Jimmy Waters, and I wanted to concoct an alien transmission, which is tough. It might be anything. He came up with several orchestrations—that's all I can call them—which went on for three or four minutes. They were almost musical. An obscure sound from space. I used that in the dub,

and some of it was used intermixed with music. So you don't really know you're hearing it. It's subliminal, but it's working on you. In *Alien* we also took body sounds and mixed them in subliminally. For instance, we used the sound of a heartbeat and the sound of blood rushing through arteries, so the whole ship becomes like a body with all these primal sounds functioning all the time and never letting you go. Sometimes they're not even loud. They're just there—and that's disturbing.

TZ: Given *Alien* and *Blade Runner*, *The Duellists* seems something of an anomaly. How did that come to be your first film?

Scott: Well, I'd wanted to do a feature film for several years, but I was never able to get the money together. Then all of a sudden the money came in. But I was without a script. It was really a question of timing. So what I did was I thumbed through all the literature that was public domain, looking for a story to adapt. That's when I came across this great novella by Conrad. I thought, this sounds like a western even though it's set in the post-Napoleonic period. So that became the basis of the script for my first film. It was all somewhat accidental.

TZ: What's your next project?

Scott: I can't really talk about it too much. It's very strange; it's elves and goblins and fairies. It's a legend basically. I want to get Rob Bottin [creator of monsters in *The Howling* and *The Thing*] to work on it with me. I want to get him off monsters and to make sweet, nice things. What we're dealing with are mythological creatures. How do you do Pan? How do you do a female wolf as a character?

TZ: Are we talking about a film based on Celtic mythology?

Scott: Beyond that. I've been messing around with the idea of a film about knights for a couple of years, but we never really cracked the screenplay. I touched on Tristan and Isolde and had a script written for that, but I felt it was too highbrow. I wanted to do a film about long ago that involved magic, but wherever you go you stumble across stones with swords stuck in them. All the old stories that have already been done. So what we've done is create a new kind of mythology and new mythological standards that are consistent.

TZ: I take it, then, that you've had enough of the future for the time being. We look forward to what you find on your second journey into the past. **17**



The Shrine

by Pamela Sargent

SHE HAD LOST EVERYTHING.
NOW SHE WAS EVEN LOSING HER CHILDHOOD.

Christine heard the childish, high voice giggling out an indistinct sentence; the woman's voice was lower and huskier. She waited. A door squeaked open and then she heard her mother's rapid footsteps on the stairs.

Christine stepped into the hall and peered at the slightly open door. Her mother had been in Christine's old room again; she had been there last night when Christine first heard the voices and had recognized one as her mother's. She went to the door, pushed it all the way open, and gazed.

Her mother had done no redecorating here, as she had everywhere else. Christine entered, turning to look at the wall of framed photographs and documents above the slightly battered dresser. A young Christine with wavy blond hair and a wide smile stood with a group of other little girls in Brownie uniforms. A thirteen-year-old Christine wore a white dress and held a clarinet; an older Christine, slightly broad shouldered but still slender, grinned up from a pool where she floated with other members of the Mapeno Valley High Aquanettes; a bare-shouldered Christine in a green formal stood at the side of a tall, handsome boy in a white dinner jacket. Her high school diploma was framed, along with other certificates; another photo showed her parents beaming proudly as they stood behind Christine and her luggage at the Titus County Airport, waiting for the plane that would take their daughter to Wellesley. There, as far as the room indicated, Christine's life ended. She had lasted less than one year at Wellesley.

She gazed at the top of the dresser, where her high school yearbook had been opened to her page. A pretty girl with flowing locks smiled up at her.

Matthews, Christine

"Onward and Upward!"

National Merit Scholar; National Honor Society, 3, 4; Student Council, 2, 3; Class Vice-President, 4; Aqua-

nettes, 3, 4; Assistant Editor, Mapeno Valley *Clarion*, 3, 4; Dramatics Club, 3, 4; Orchestra, 2, 3, 4; Le Cercle Francais, 2, 3, 4; Yearbook Staff, 4.

She closed the yearbook. The room was suddenly oppressive. She was surrounded by past glories; the room, with its embroidered pillows and watercolor paintings, was a shrine to what she had once been. Her mother could drive to her brother's house, only forty-five minutes away, to view his athletic trophies and his various certificates, but Christine's had remained here. She had been a good daughter, as Charles had been a good son. He was still a good son. Christine had not been a good daughter for a long time.

Just coffee for me," Christine said as she entered the kitchen.

Her mother looked up from the stove. "Now, Chrissie, you know how important a good breakfast is."

"I never eat breakfast."

"You should."

Christine sat down at the small kitchen table while her mother served the food. "Well," she said, and sipped her coffee.

"Well," Mrs. Matthews replied. She poked at her eggs, took a bite of toast, then gazed at her daughter with calm gray eyes. "So it really is over between you and Jim."

"He moved all his stuff out."

"I was sorry to hear it. Maybe if you and Jim had gotten married—"

"Oh, Mom, that would have been great. The lawyers would have made everything even worse. I suppose you think a divorce would have been more respectable." Christine caught herself, too late. "I'm sorry."

"I meant that if you had been married, you

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would have had more of a commitment, and you both might have worked harder to stay together." Mrs. Matthews lowered her eyes. "Your father and I had almost thirty pretty good years. Maybe we wouldn't have had that much without a strong commitment. We had more than a lot of people have. Actually, I'm not alone—I think a third of my friends are divorced. Or widowed—that's probably worse."

Christine ate part of an egg, then nibbled at some sausage. "You haven't redone my room. You've redone every other room in the house. Every time I come here, the whole house is different."

"I only do a little, once in a while. If you came home more often, you'd see I don't redecorate that much."

"You know I don't have time." Christine's voice was harsh.

"I know, dear. I was only making a point, not an accusation."

Christine sighed, trying to think of what else to say.

"You never hung up my degree from State."

"I guess I never got around to it."

"You didn't put it up because you expected more from me."

"Now, Chrissie, you know that isn't true. I only wanted you to be happy."

Christine said, "I heard voices last night, in my old room."

Her mother's head shot up; Christine saw fear in her eyes. Mrs. Matthews' once-blond hair was nearly all gray. Her face was thinner, too, the hollows in her cheeks deeper; her long blue house-dress seemed looser. One blue-veined hand pushed the plate of sausage and eggs aside; Mrs. Matthews had barely touched her breakfast.

"It was the radio," the older woman said at last. "One of those plays on the public station."

"It didn't sound like the radio. I heard your voice, and someone else's. A child's."

"It was the radio." Mrs. Matthews' voice was unusually firm.



"Maybe it was." Christine drummed on the table top with her fingers, then stood up. "I'm going for a walk."

"I'll clean up here. Your brother jogs now, you know. Three miles a day."

"I don't jog. I only walk."

Colonial houses stood on each side of the winding road. Christine searched the neighborhood for signs of change. Three houses now had solar panels; others had cords of wood stacked in yards under tarpaulins.

A young woman hurried down a driveway, juggling a box and a large purse. "Toni!" Christine shouted.

"Chris!" The woman opened her car door, threw in the box and the purse, and strode toward Christine. "God, I haven't seen you in ages. You haven't changed."

Christine smiled at the lie, grateful that her raincoat hid her heavy thighs. Toni was stockier, her dark hair shorter and frizzed by a permanent. "Mother told me you were back."

Toni hooted. "Back! What a nice way to put it. I guess she must have told you about my divorce."

"She mentioned it."

"My parents have really been great. Mom takes care of Mark when he gets home from school. I have a job at the mall now, with Macy's." Toni glanced at her watch. "How's that guy you're living with?"

"We broke up."

"God, I'm sorry to hear it."

"Don't be. I wasn't." Christine tried to sound hard and rational. "This place looks the same."

"It'll never change. It's stuck in a time warp or something. There's a couple down the street with four kids—can you imagine anyone having four kids nowadays? I don't know how they afford it. Mrs. Feinberg's running a day care thing in her house—you can't afford these houses without two incomes. Maybe a few things have changed." Toni paused. "How is your mother, by the way?"

"She's all right."

"I don't want to sound nosy. She looks kind of pale to me. She's in your old room a lot."

Christine looked up, startled.

"I can't help noticing," Toni went on. "I see the light at night. She's in there almost every day after she comes home."

"She likes to listen to the radio there while she does her sewing." Christine hoped that she sounded convincing.

Toni looked at her watch again. "Hey, why don't you come over tonight? We can talk after Mark goes to bed."

Christine saw two girls standing by a pool, giggling; they would swim through life as they had

swum through the blue, chlorinated water. "I can't. We're going to Chuck's for supper."

"Maybe tomorrow."

"Mother has tickets for the symphony. And I'm leaving the day after."

"Well. Next time, maybe."

"Next time."

"See you, Chris."

As she approached her mother's house, Christine looked up at the window of her old room. The window was at the side of the house, overlooking the hedged-in yard.

A shape moved past the window; a small hand pressed against the pane. A little girl was looking at her through the glass; her long blond hair curled over her shoulders. The child smiled.

Except for the child's bright, golden hair, thicker and wavier than hers had ever been, she might have been looking at herself as a little girl. The child continued to smile, then reached for the curtains and pulled them shut.

Christine hurried around the yard to the back door and pushed it open, entering the kitchen. The house was still. At last she heard her mother's footfall in the hall above, and then the creak of the stairs.

"Chrissie," her mother said as she entered the kitchen. She still wore her long blue housedress; she had always dressed early in the morning before.

"Who's that little girl?"

"What little girl?"

"The one I saw in my room, looking out the window."

"You must be mistaken." Her mother's voice was flat. "There was no one in your room."

"I saw her."

"You're imagining it."

Christine passed her mother and pounded up the stairs. The door to her old room was still open; she hurried through it.

The little girl was not there. The room felt cold; Christine pulled her coat more tightly about her. Abruptly the floor shifted under her feet. She staggered, righted herself, and heard the sound of a child's laughter.

Christine covered her ears, then let her hands drop. The room was warm again; everything was as it had been. Her mother had said that there was no little girl; that meant she had imagined it all. She would have to put it out of her mind.

After Christine had greeted her sister-in-law, said hello to her nephew, and peeked into the baby's room, Charles led her to the basement. His bar sat in one corner in front of a stainless steel sink. He poured her a bourbon, then opened the refrigerator and took out a light beer. "My refuge," he said.

He came around the bar and sat down next to her.

"Shouldn't we go upstairs?"

"It's all right. Jenny's got to nurse Trina again, and then she'll have to put Curt to bed, and then she and Mom'll watch the MacNeil-Lehrer Report before supper. We can go up then." He paused. "I heard about Jim."

"He moved all his stuff out finally."

"I thought you two would be together forever. I kept expecting you to call and say you'd gotten married."

Christine sipped her bourbon, then gazed at the glass. "After he left, I came home one day and started fixing drinks. Jim always had a vodka and tonic and I always had a bourbon. Well, I fixed myself a drink and then I suddenly realized I'd fixed his, too. That was when I finally cried about it." She shook her head. "You seem to be doing all right."

"I guess so." Charles's ash blond hair was already thinning around his temples; his moustache was thicker, as if to compensate. "One thing about being a dentist—the customers can't talk back to you while you're working."

"You'll be all right. You always were. You were always the good child. I screwed up."

"Chris. Mom worries about you sometimes."

"No, she doesn't. She's never forgiven me, not since my breakdown. It was as if I was saying she was a lousy mother because I didn't turn out right. And I'm not married, and I don't have kids, and I don't have a lovely home and a fine husband. She hates me for it, but she won't say so." Christine gulped at her bourbon. "If she says she worries about me, it's only because she thinks she's supposed to say it."

"Oh, Chris, come on."

"She never came to see me when I was in that expensive bin. She never asked me why I broke down. After that, I was damaged goods as far as she was concerned. As long as I was perfect, she loved me. When I wasn't, she just turned herself off."

"What do you want her to do, say she's sorry?"

"That wouldn't change anything."

"Then forget it. It's your problem, Chris. You can't keep feeling sorry for yourself."

She glared at him. "It's easy for you to talk, Chuck. You didn't fall."

"You think so? Every time Dad visits, he asks me why I don't keep up my sports more, maybe coach Little League. I know he would have liked to see me pitch in the major leagues—hell, I wanted it, too. Nobody grows up thinking, 'Boy, I'm really into teeth.' But I'm not going to get depressed over it."

"Chuck, Mother's been spending a lot of time in my old room. It worries me. She—" Christine was about to mention the little girl, but changed her mind. "That room gives me the willies. I wish she'd

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put all my old crap away."

"You could take it with you when you drive back to the city."

"I don't have room. And I wouldn't care to be reminded of how wonderful I once was."

"Chris, you've got to stop it. You have the rest of your life—don't poison it. Grow up. Everyone fails in some way. You have to learn to live with that."

She heard the voices again. Christine threw off her sheet and coverlet and tiptoed toward the door, opening it slowly. Creeping into the darkened hallway, she moved cautiously toward her old room.

A child's voice giggled. "Do you like it?"

"I think it's beautiful. But you always do everything well."

"I'm glad. I love you, Mommy."

"I love you, too."

Christine trembled as she recognized her mother's voice.

"Read to me, Mommy." Bedsprings squeaked.

"Which book?"

"*The House at Pooh Corner*."

"You're such a good little girl. You won't disappoint me, will you, Chrissie?"

"Never."

Chrissie. Christine backed toward the guest room. How long had the child been living in this house, and what had enabled her to appear? She knew the answer to the second question—her own failure, and her mother's disappointment. She shook her head. It was a dream; it had to be.

She got back into bed and lay there, awake, for a long time.

Christine had slept uneasily and her eyes felt gritty in the morning. She got out of bed, pulled on her robe, and darted into the hall before she had time to change her mind. As she entered her old room, she closed the door behind her.

The bed had been made, or had never been slept in at all. The artifacts of her childhood and youth still hung on the walls in their usual places, and *The House at Pooh Corner* was back on the bookshelf between *Winnie-the-Pooh* and *Stuart Little*. The yearbook was open once again, this time to a picture of Christine and a boy named Lars Heldstrom under the caption "Most Likely To Succeed."

She gripped the dresser; her hands became claws. "Come out," she muttered. "Damn you, come out." The room was still. She was having another breakdown; the breakup with Jim and the visit home had unhinged her. But her mother had been in the room, and she had seen the child in the window.

"Who are you? If you don't come out, I'll take Mother away. You'll never see her again."

"No, you won't." The voice seemed to hover

above her; she clutched at the dresser, afraid to move. "She's mine now. Go away."

Christine spun around. The little girl was standing in front of the closet door, dressed in a pair of blue overalls and a white turtleneck. Her small hands held a clarinet; her blue eyes were icy.

"Who are you?"

"I'm Chrissie. Don't you know that?" The girl's voice was low and harsh. "This isn't your room anymore. Mommy comes to visit me every day."

"She's not your mommy."

"She is. I could feel her calling me, and I wanted to be with her so much. I found out I could come in here and stay for a while. I'll never let her go away."

"You will. I'll force you to."

"You won't. She loves me. She doesn't love you anymore."

Christine strode toward the child. The little girl retreated to a corner, her back against the closet door. As Christine reached for the girl, the wall suddenly dropped away; she was standing at the edge of the floor, gazing down into a thick gray fog. She teetered on the edge, afraid she would fall and keep falling, and clawed at the gray mists, then staggered back and fell across the bed.

She sat up. The room was as it had been; the little girl was gone.

Christine pressed her hands to her face. She had never had delusions; even during the worst days of her illness, she had never seen things that weren't there. Depression had been her affliction, and despair, and guilt.

She rushed from the room and was halfway down the stairs before she had time to think. Her mother would only evade a confrontation, and there was no one else to help her.

Christine climbed the front steps, reached into her purse, and removed the key she had taken from the kitchen wall that morning; she had parked her car in front of a house farther down the street. Her mother would not be expecting her; Christine had said that she was going to the mall to see Toni.

Opening the storm door, she propped it against her back while inserting the key, turning it slowly so that the lock would not snap, then pushed the door open. After closing both doors, she took off her coat and put it on the entryway's wooden bench with her purse, then slipped off her shoes.

The living room was a beige desert, its modular furniture unstained, its only oases of color two potted plants and a Picasso print over the fireplace. Her stockinged toes curled against the thick, pale rug. She could hear nothing; she knew where her mother was.

She moved stealthily through the dining room

and toward the back of the house, stopping when she reached the staircase. Her face was flushed; she pressed icy fingers to her cheeks. She had often sneaked up the stairs when she came home late from dates, always able to avoid the steps that creaked. She set her foot down on the first, skipping the second, holding on to the bannister.

When she reached the next floor, she could hear the voices; the door to her room was ajar. She moved toward the crack of light, the wood under her feet was hard and cold. The child said, "I'm going to be the best, Mommy. I'm going to be the best at everything."

Christine thrust the door open violently; it bounced against the door stop. The little girl, still dressed in overalls, looked up; she was kneeling on the floor, her arms around Mrs. Matthews' legs. The older woman sat in a rocker; she gazed past Christine, her gray eyes empty.

"Mother," Christine said. The woman's face seemed even paler now, her hair more silvery. "Mother."

The child stood up slowly. "Leave her alone," the little girl said. "You can't have her. She's mine. She'll always be mine."

"Mother, listen to me." Mrs. Matthews stirred slightly at Christine's words. "You have to come away from here."

"She gave you everything," the child said. "She did everything for you, and you failed. But I won't."

"Mother, come out of this room."

"It's too late," the little girl said. "It's too late. You can't change anything now. You can't say you're sorry—it won't help." She grabbed the older woman's hand. "She's mine."

Christine looked around the room, the monument to her past. She strode to the wall, pulled off a framed photograph, and smashed it on the floor. "This isn't me now. You should have thrown all this out years ago." She pulled down another photo, then hurled the National Merit certificate against the wall.

"Chrissie." Her mother was standing now. Christine took a step toward her, then noticed that Mrs. Matthews was gazing down at the child. "May I go with you now?"

The little girl smiled. "Yes. We'll never come back, never."

"No," Christine cried.

"I need her now," the child said. "You don't." She tugged at Mrs. Matthews' hand, leading her toward the corner next to the closet door.

Christine darted after them, stepped off the floor, and was surrounded by fog. "Come back!" The gray formlessness swallowed her words; the thick masses pinned her arms to her side. She could feel nothing under her feet. "Mother, don't go." The mists parted for a moment, revealing a distant room,



a tiny canopied bed, the small figures of a little girl and a woman in a blue housecoat. "I need you, too." The fog closed around her again, imprisoning her.

Hands gripped her shoulders; she was being pulled back. She flailed about, stumbled, and found herself leaning against the closet door, clinging to someone's arm.

"Chrissie. Chrissie, are you all right?"

Christine raised her head. A woman was with her. She wore a long housedress; her face was Mrs. Matthews'. But her blond hair was only lightly sprinkled with silver and her gray eyes were warm.

"I'm fine," she said, letting go of the woman's arms.

"I hope so. You look a little pale. I thought I'd find you here." The woman waved a hand at the wall. "Maybe I can help you decide what to take with you—I'll just store these old things in the attic otherwise." She poked at the broken glass on the floor with one toe, then tilted her head to one side. "Are you sure you're all right?"

Christine managed to nod her head.

"Good. I'd better get dressed so we can get started. I wish you could stay longer—I do so enjoy having you home."

Before she left the room, Christine leaned for a moment against her new mother, the one who, through some slip in possibility, would understand and forgive, the one she had always wanted. 17



Etching by Bruce Waldman

IT'S OUT THERE, ALL RIGHT—JUST LIKE
PELLUCIDAR AND WONDERLAND AND OZ . . .

Altenmoor, Where the Dogs Dance

by Mort Castle

One day in spring, when the boy came home from school, he did not find Rusty in the backyard, on the screened-in porch, or anywhere downstairs in the house. He knew Rusty could not be up with Grandpa. Last winter when the weather had gone so cold, Rusty's back legs had gone cold, too, so cold he could no longer climb stairs.

The boy's mother took him into the kitchen

and tried to explain, though he hadn't asked her. "Rusty's gone, Marky."

He hated being called "Marky," but she was his mom, so what could he do? Dad called him "Mark," and sometimes "Son," and that was better, but it still wasn't right.

Grandpa knew and always called him "Boy." He felt like a "boy," not "Mark," or "Son," or (phoo!)

"Marky"! Once in a while he wondered if that would change when he got older.

Mom said Rusty was very old. In a dog way, Rusty was more than a hundred. She said Rusty had had a very good life because everyone loved him a lot, and now Rusty's life was over.

The way Mom talked made the boy think she was trying not to frighten him. Then she hugged him so hard all his air whooshed out, and he thought Mom was trying not be frightened, too.

But the boy didn't understand, so when he had air enough to talk, he said, "I'll see Grandpa." Grandpa knew how to talk about things so the boy understood because Grandpa was very smart. He was so smart that long ago, when he could still see, Grandpa even used to write books.

"He'll like that," Mom said. "Go see him."

Upstairs at the end of the hall, across from his own room, the boy knocked on Grandpa's door. He waited *one-two-three*, then heard Grandpa say, "Enter." Grandpa always made him wait *one-two-three*, never *one*, or *one-two*, or *one-two-three-four*.

Grandpa sat in a straight-backed chair by the window. Grandpa didn't have a rocking chair, and the boy knew why because once Grandpa had told him. "Old people are supposed to sit in rockers. Seldom in my life have I done the 'supposed to's.'"

Through the window the sun shone a square of light at Grandpa's feet. The boy stood with his sneakers at the edge of the square. If he stepped inside, it might break, the yellow oozing out like the yolk of a poached egg.

The boy said, "Grandpa, Mom says Rusty is gone."

"Your mother is truthful enough," Grandpa said, "through so sadly lacking in imagination it's often difficult for me to acknowledge her as my daughter."

"Oh," the boy said. Sometimes Grandpa talked funny, except he never did when he was talking about important things—like Altenmoor.

"Mom says Rusty was very old," the boy said.

"Indeed," Grandpa said.

"You're very old."

"Once more, indeed."

The boy remembered when Grandpa had been old—but not *very* old. Grandpa got very old when the cloudy-looking white film covered his eyes. After that, Grandpa couldn't read anymore, not even the Altenmoor books Grandpa had written himself.

"I'll miss Rusty," the boy said. "You know, like how he used to sleep with his head between his paws. He had big paws."

"I will miss that too, Boy," Grandpa said.

"The picture of Rusty asleep and the sound of his adenoidal snore are preserved and treasured in my memory."

Grandpa tipped his head. For a second the boy

thought Grandpa wasn't blind at all because the boy could feel himself being seen. "Do say on, Boy," Grandpa said.

"Is Rusty dead?" the boy said.

Grandpa said, "There are some who would say that and some who would believe it as well." He pointed at the boy. "And you? What do you say? What do you believe?"

The boy thought. Then he said, "No."

"No?"

"Rusty went to Altenmoor," the boy said, and he hoped he believed what he was saying. "He went once through the Rubber Tree Woods and jig-jogged left past the Marmalade Mound. Then he followed the winding Happy-To-You-River in Altenmoor."

"Continue, Boy." Grandpa leaned forward, elbows on his knees, hands folded under his chin. "Speak to me of Altenmoor. So long since I've written of the noble realm and longer still since I've gone a'journeying there."

"In Altenmoor, every morning is a Sunrise Surprise and the buttercups thunder like twelve tubas."

"Only louder," Grandpa said.

"Much louder! And the winds are all hot winds and happy winds and wild winds!"

"And the animals?"

"Oh," the boy said, remembering the animals. "The pigs whistle 'Dixie' in four-part harmony, and the cats play silver cymbals in three-quarter time."

"And the dogs?"

"The dogs dance!" the boy said. "The dogs do dance all the day!"

"You see," Grandpa said, "it was time for Rusty to be where the dogs dance. Yes. Rusty has gone to Altenmoor."

The boy smiled, but the smile didn't feel all the way right because it pinched at the corners of his mouth, and so he had to ask. "Really?"

"Really? The moden rephrasing of the ageless 'What is truth?' The methaphysicians ponder as they will, all we truly know, we know only here." Grandpa patted himself on the chest.

The boy said, "There is a real Altenmoor?"

"Were there not, could I have written the seventeen books what comprise the complete Altenmoor chronicles? If there were no Oz, could Mr. Baum have related the adventures of Dorothy and Tin Woodsman and Scarecros? What of Treasure Island and Never-Neverland, or savage Pellucidar and Wonderland? If they did not exist, how could people tell of them?"

Again Grandpa patted himself on the chest. "Books, Boy, are from the heart and of the heart. That makes them not merely true, but truer than true. Do you understand?"

"Some," the boy said, "not everything."

"Some is more than most people," Grandpa

Altenmoor, Where the Dogs Dance

said. "It will suffice."

The boy had to ask something else. "But how could Rusty get to Altenmoor, Granpa? It's a long, long way and his legs were no good."

"Excellent point, Boy," Grandpa said, "and logic demands an answer."

Grandpa stretched out his arm and spread his fingers. In the sunlight the veins of his hand were ripply blue and strong. "I touched Rusty's head, you see. I patted that boney knob at the back of his skull and I tickled between his ears. I touched him, and all the strength I could give, I gave to Rusty so he might make the trek to Altenmoor."

"And then he went?"

"He did," Grandpa said. "He went once through the Rubber Tree Woods and he jig-jogged left past the Marmalade Mound."

"Then he followed the winding Happy-To-You River to Altenmoor!" the boy and Grandpa said together.

"Yes," Grandpa nodded, "and now Rusty is dancing, he is dancing where the dogs dance. I believe that."

"I do, too," the boy said.

On a winter night so cold the house could not keep out all the chill, the boy awoke. He thought at first that a dream had frightened him awake, but he realized he was not frightened.

Then he knew it was a thought that had pulled him from his sleep.

He got out of bed. Even through the carpet the floor was shivery, so he slid his feet along instead of lifting them. He did not need a light.

He stepped across the hall and quietly knocked on the door. It would have been wrong to wake Mom and Dad. They did not mind getting up if he had a stomach ache or a bad dream, but his stomach felt fine and he was not dreaming.

The boy waited *one-two-three*.

Then he waited *four* and *five* and *six* and *seven* before he gently turned the knob and went in.

Winter moonlight seeped through the window. Grandpa was in bed, lying on his back, the blankets drawn halfway up his chest. His hands were outside the blankets, fingers of the right over those of the left.

"Grandpa?" The boy stood beside the bed, thinking *one-two-three-four-five-six*.

Then the boy thought about what he would miss about Grandpa, things he wanted to keep in his memory. There were a lot of things, and once he was sure he had them all, the boy touched the back of Grandpa's hand, then took hold of three of Grandpa's fingers and squeezed.

Grandpa's eyes opened. Beneath the milky glaze his eyes looked right at the boy, and this time the boy was almost certain Grandpa could see him.

"Yes? What is it, Boy?"

"Are you going to Altenmoor now?" the boy said.

Slowly Grandpa sat up. "Yes, I believe I am."

"Then I have to help you."

"Yes." Grandpa nodded. "Keep hold of my hand, Boy."

Grandpa's eyes opened.
Beneath the milky glaze
his eyes looked
right at the boy,
and this time the boy
was almost certain
Grandpa could see him.

The boy did. It took a long time, but he could feel himself giving all the strength he could give to Grandpa. He knew it was happening because he started to feel as though he were going to sleep, the way he did in the back of the car after a long day at the beach.

Then Grandpa said, "Thank you," and took away his hand.

"Grandpa, will you go now?"

"Shortly." Grandpa said. "No longer than it takes a pig to whistle 'Dixie.' Now you should return to bed. There's still much of a winter's night to sleep away."

"Okay," the boy said. He went to the door, then stopped and looked back. "Grandpa, you know. The Rubber Tree Woods and the Marmalade Mound and the winding Happy-To-You River."

"Of course, Boy," Grandpa said. "Where else?"

The boy said, "Goodbye, Grandpa."

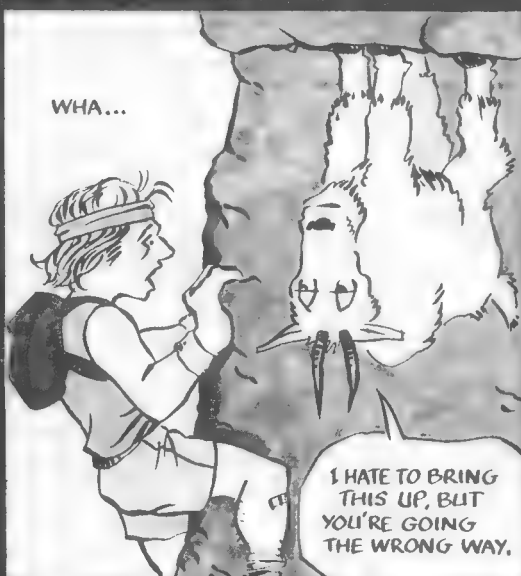
The next morning the boy was up early because his mother and father came to his room and woke him and told him he wouldn't be going to school. Dad stood by the door. He had the same look on his face he'd had when someone stole the car last year.

Mom held the boy close to her. She was crying. She said, "Grandpa is gone, Marky."

"Yes," the boy said. He wished he could explain, but he knew she would never understand. 17

VERTIGOAT

BY TONY GALLOWAY



JOCKEYING FOR TIME

BY DAVID
SHIFREN

HE'D STUMBLERD UPON THE SECRET EVERY JOCKEY DREAMS OF . . .
AND IT WAS TURNING INTO A NIGHTMARE.

See-sawing a moment before slowly tipping up to click against the bracket, the metal rod made Tommy frown. He tapped the slide again and when the bar balanced, read the number. Oh-eight, still one-oh-eight. No good. He had to be oh-five or under.

He stepped off the gym scale and wiped a sweaty sleeve across his face. Picking up the rope, he shook out the kinks, stepped through the middle, and pulled it taut against the backs of his sneakers. Handles up and out, knees bent, he drew the rope overhead and, as it sailed downward, flicked his wrists and jumped—an inch, no more. The rope kissed the floor beneath his feet—*thit*.

Across the room the mesh-covered wall clock read ten after nine. Half a minute's skipping and Tommy found his rhythm.

Thit-thit-thit-thit . . .

He jumped, gazing at nothing in particular—not the clock, not the darkness outside the windows, not the mirrored gym walls reflecting the empty room behind him, the chin-up bar, rowing machine and barbell areas vacant, deserted-looking in that special way a gym gets when no one's on the equipment.

Thit-thit-thit-thit . . .

At thirty-three, Tommy was one of the oldest jocks at the track. But he well remembered the first time he'd laid eyes on a racehorse. He'd been twelve, on an outing that had been his father's idea. That Sunday afternoon he'd been mesmerized. More than just the green grass and open space, more than even the electric anticipation buzzing in the air, there had been something that day appreciable to only a kid

who'd always been small for his age, seeing jockeys for the first time. Men hardly bigger than he was, men in miniature, swaggered and hunkered in brightly colored silks and paper-thin leather boots, laughing, snorting, cursing like much bigger men, and clapping one another's backs. They acted like they owned the track, with everyone else there by personal invitation. Men like his father—sleeves rolled up, racing forms in hand—and others, very unlike his father, in dark suits and sunglasses, smoking cigars—all smiled admiringly, star struck by the diminutive heroes.

Then and there Tommy'd vowed to become a jockey, a rider of racehorses, if he could. The rest of that day had only reinforced his resolve. The gigantic horses seen up close between races, the tiny jocks perched on high, confident astride those broad, muscled backs—these were all Tommy had needed to see to clinch his decision.

If his reasons for continuing to race had changed somewhat over the years, that original thrill had never quite died.

But Tommy hadn't had an easy time of it. Sure; he'd earned a living, but barely. Anyone could stay with a thing that reaped rewards. When it didn't, that was another story. And him, he'd never won a big race, never made a killing. Not that he didn't pray for it—he'd have given anything to. For the money, sure, but also for the recognition, the fame. Thirty-three years old. More than twenty years since he'd seen that first race.

He started—and missed his jump—as from the corner of his eye he saw the gym door open and a



He raised his hand to the bar, but suddenly felt an overwhelming exhaustion. Then, just as abruptly, the feeling gave way to a kind of lightness. What was going on?

head appear; the face smiled, then was gone. New janitor? Tommy dropped the rope and stepped back onto the scale. Weight was so much a part of it. The jockey's perpetual enemy. Some riders got by with a minimum of dieting, but others, like himself, had to watch each calorie. He suddenly realized he hadn't touched a bite of food since the night before. Good! Okay, now what was the verdict? He raised his hand to the bar, but suddenly felt an overwhelming exhaustion; then, just as abruptly, the feeling gave way to a kind of lightness. What was going on? Tommy felt he could have brushed the ceiling, the twenty-foot ceiling, with his fingertips if he'd jumped. He didn't try to, but gripped the front of the scale for support and rested his head. The damndest feeling!

When it had passed a moment later, he raised his hand to the bar again. He'd skipped meals before, but never with any problem. The notched bar clicked with conviction and he guessed he must have shed a good pound and a half, maybe two. But as he adjusted the slide—no, it made no sense. The dial read ninety-six. Ninety-six pounds? He couldn't have lost twelve pounds in thirty-five minutes, no matter *how* he'd jumped rope. He stepped to the floor, then back onto the scale. Again, ninety-six. Great. The spring must have sprung, or something.

Tommy stepped down and crossed the lacquered floor to the scale near the showers. He mounted the platform and watched the needle swing lazily around to . . . ninety-six again. He looked around. It made no sense. He hadn't weighed under a hundred since he'd turned sixteen. Had both scales broken simultaneously? A crazy coincidence. And that they should both read—

A cramp hit Tommy in his left calf, and quickly, without stepping off the platform, he dropped to one knee to massage the muscle. They came on so suddenly, leg cramps, this one probably brought on by the rope. If you didn't knead them out immediately, the grapefruit-sized knot of muscle hurt like the devil. As he knelt, a small movement caught his eye. The scale needle above was swinging slowly around to the higher numbers. Ninety-seven . . . Ninety-eight . . . Tommy slowly straightened. Ninety-nine . . . It finally stopped at one-oh-three.

What in hell! Now the scale was working again! But it had almost seemed—it made no sense—but it had been as if the tensing leg muscle had somehow *caused* the needle to rotate. Muscle tissue was denser than fat, of course, and weighed more. Did that have anything to do with it? With the needle

now reading a steady hundred-and-three, Tommy glanced over his shoulder, then looked back at the dial. He concentrated on different muscles in his body, flexing, tightening them in turn, as many as he could think of.

Slowly, but indisputably, the weight shown on the dial increased. One-oh-three and a half, one-oh-four. . . . And now it stopped at what was very likely his actual weight, one-oh-four and a half. Again he looked around, stunned with his discovery. The room was still empty, but there, in the doorway, that janitor again, grinning.

"Hey, wanna see something? You," Tommy called. "C'mere a second." The face disappeared. Tommy jumped from the scale and crossed to the door. "Look at this," he said, yanking on the handle. "Wanna see somethin' cra—"

There was no one in sight.

Something damned weird at the gym tonight," Tommy said. "You know I'm usually one-oh-six, one-oh-seven?"

Angela didn't look up. Sitting across the table from Tommy, she sawed at a pork chop on her plate and said nothing.

"Well, I been trying to get down for this big one Saturday—"

"Done?" Angela rose suddenly, whisked Tommy's plate to the center of the table, and dropped her own dish atop his untouched, now-cold macaroni.

"Thanks," he said absently. "So I'm there at the gym, and I get on the—"

Angela dropped the dishes noisily into the sink.

"—I climb on the scale—"

"Listen, Tommy, I'm sorry you didn't like the mac's," Angie interrupted, "but, see, when I have to reheat things—"

"It was fine, Ange, but listen, about the gym—"

"Oh, the gym, right. Excuse me!"

"For chrissake, Ange, I was a little late—"

"An hour and a half isn't 'a little,' Tommy!"

"I got things on my mind! Saturday's a big race! If I can just lose some weight—that's what I'm trying to tell you."

"Listen, Tommy, it's awfully late and I've got work in the morning. Maybe you better go home tonight . . ."

Standing at the sink with her back to Tommy, Angie spoke over her shoulder. Tommy's eyes darted to the wall clock above her head. Ten-thirty. He could be back at the gym by eleven.

He rose, dropped his napkin on the table and said, "All right, Ange, all right. Maybe it would be best—if *that's what you want*—" He strode hurriedly out of the kitchen and into the hallway, grabbing his jacket from the closet. Angie wasn't following.

"I'll phone you tomorrow," he called. On im-

pulse he added, "We'll go to Little Venice . . ."

"Thanks for stopping," yelled Angie in a strange tone. But Tommy didn't hear. Already out in the hallway, he was rushing toward the door to the stairs.

"Ballotti, party of two," Tommy said. "I made a reservation."

The tall, olive-skinned maitre d' bowed slightly and led Tommy past linen-covered tables with candles and silver, to a spot in the back. Angie wasn't in sight. Tommy sat. He was ten minutes late, but she wouldn't have left so soon, would she? He'd give her fifteen minutes, then to hell with her! The maitre d' came toward Tommy and stopped at his elbow.

"A telephone call, sir. The other member of your party will be slightly delayed."

Tommy's first reaction was of annoyance. Fifteen minutes could have been another quarter-hour at the gym. That was a thousand skips of the rope, a few hundred sit-ups. Damn it! But then he began to think of last night, after he'd left Angie's and gone back to the gym. And how things had started to go crazy.

He'd driven fast, changed his clothes, and been on the floor by ten-fifty. As he had figured, the gym was deserted. No one came in that late and he'd had to use his jock's key. After warming up with some calisthenics and running, he'd gone to the scale. That was the real reason he'd come. It had read one-oh-three. He'd worked out hard, and after forty-five minutes, just before midnight, had hopped back onto the platform to find himself two pounds lower. Then he let the exhaustion catch up with him, as he had before. He slumped his head onto his chest, closed his eyes, and relaxed his body as totally as possible. After a moment he felt that same weird sensation. Slowly he opened his eyes to look at the dial. He gasped. Seventy pounds! He stepped off, stepped on again. The same. He hurried to a wall mirror and looked at himself. No change that he could see. He certainly wasn't skeletally emaciated. At the barbell area he found a sixty-pound bar, which he quickly pressed once, twice, three times. He seemed no weaker. Finally he dragged to the scale as many weights as he could manage and placed them, one by one, onto the platform. The readings matched. The scale was right. He got back on by himself and watched the needle sweep smoothly around to seventy-five.

Now he began to experiment, tensing one set of muscles after another. Biceps, pectorals, deltoids, abdomen . . . Sure enough, the needle crept clockwise around the dial.

He could do it, then. He *could*! Could *will* himself lighter and heavier. It was like that phrase he'd heard: "mind over matter." Tommy suddenly

realized that over forty hours had passed since he'd eaten anything, yet he didn't feel hungry in the least. The thought of food actually repulsed him. But, more important, he realized the value of his new ability. Why, if he could "think" himself down to a low weight before Saturday's race, just before mounting but after the pre-race weigh-in, he could ride at fifty, maybe forty pounds. His horse would fly with no strain at all! And, being a long shot—his mount, Bottom Dollar, had been running poorly lately—if he bet highly on himself he could rake in a damned good-sized pot besides the winner's take.

Yes, it seemed incredible, this newfound, impossible ability. But how could Tommy know it hadn't happened to other jocks? Maybe it was the success secret behind the best riders in the business. Surely each would want to keep it quiet, so as to continue racing. Yes, maybe Tommy had finally hit upon the secret that every jockey who stumbled across never breathed a word of.

In any case, there seemed no reason not to cash in on it.

But what if this extraordinary gift was dangerous? To be safe Tommy'd visit the track infirmary right after the race—or rather, he'd go to some out-of-town country doctor next week. Surely he could wait until then.

Tommy snapped from his reverie as Angie appeared suddenly beside the table. He rose to hold her chair and she sat, acting coolly.

"Sorry I'm late," she said.

"No problem." He shot her a smile.

A short, thin, pencil-moustached waiter came almost immediately with menus and asked if they wanted drinks.

"Seven and seven," said Angie. Tommy, thinking of the alcohol's calories, shook his head.

"Listen, Ange," he began, when the waiter had left with their orders, "I know I've been acting funny lately, but there's a reason—"

"Sure," said Angie. "And it's obvious, Tommy. Racing means more to you than anything else: Including me."

"Damn it, now listen—"

"No, Tommy, for a change *you* listen. We've been together two years now and I've always had this idea of us building something together. It's nothing new to you, we've talked about it before. And you've admitted wanting a family as much as I do—"

"Well, I *do*—"

"You say you do. But are you willing to give up anything for it? That's how people prove what's important to them. Tommy, we both know you couldn't support a family on your earnings . . ."

"But that's why Saturday's race means so much! That isn't just some chicken-feed first prize!"

"And that's what you'll always say: 'Just this



race, just that one coming up, this next one's the last..." Angie shook her head. "No, Tommy, that's the part I can't believe. It'll always be 'one more race.'"

The food came then, and Angie fell silent until the waiter had left. She began eating, not looking up to meet Tommy's eyes. Her silver clicked noisily on her plate.

"You're not eating," she said in a neutral tone.

"I'm not really hungry."

"Well then it wasn't a very good idea to come here, was it?"

The bitch! Tommy felt really surprised. He'd never seen her this bitter. He forced himself to cut a piece of steak and fork it into his mouth. Immediately he felt a wave of nausea, a cramp that felt like a fist in his stomach.

Maybe something really *was* wrong? Ought he to rush to a doctor, and to hell with the race?

But no, Saturday meant everything now. He needed the money to begin making things up to Angie. Some nights out, a little wining, a little dining. That would do the trick. The gut pain was only to be expected after his not having eaten in so long. Probably his stomach had shriveled to the size of a prune. He excused himself and made for the men's room.

The clean, brightly lit lavatory was empty, and he locked himself in a stall. His back against the door, he stared at the tile floor and forced three fingers down his throat. He gagged, coughed... A minute later he stood at the mirror running cool water over his hands and rinsing his face. He combed back his hair, straightened his tie, and went out.

Seating himself again, Tommy saw that Angie seemed not to have touched a bite more of her meal.

"What's the matter," he said, feigning cheeriness, "no good?"

She looked at him sternly. "*You* must not think so!"

Served him right for trying to fool her! Angie had been around the track long enough to know a standard jock routine.

"Well—" he began gruffly.

"Tommy, how do you think that makes me feel! We can't even eat a decent dinner out, you're so obsessed! You're not being fair, and I can't take it anymore!"

Should he tell her about the weight ability? It'd straighten things out, make her understand why he had to run this race and was positive he'd win. But quickly Tommy decided no, he couldn't tell her now. First, she'd think he'd gone nutsy on her: "I can make my weight go up or down in minutes just by thinking about it, Ange." Sure. And even when he'd

gotten her home, and dragged out the bathroom scale and proved it, he'd have succeeded only in scaring the hell out of her. She'd insist he get to some doctor or hospital emergency room. No, he couldn't tell her now. It would have to wait until later.

He found Angie looking at him. "You can't put people on hold like this, Tommy! We are not here solely for your personal convenience." She was up, then, dropping the napkin across her plate and turning to leave. "I'm sorry, but it's true. You can't expect people to wait until *you've* got time." She strode hurriedly, resolutely out, leaving people at nearby tables staring into their plates.

Tommy'd half-risen too, but the impulse to run after her was checked by another feeling, almost of relief. Okay, he thought, let her go. The race was almost here, and at least now he could concentrate on the weight business. When he was standing in the winner's circle, silver cup in hand, then, starting right then, he could begin making it up to her.

Tommy barked "Check!" at the waiter, and when the bill was settled, he headed for the door. His biggest regret was that the gym closed early tonight.

He was almost at the door, when, as he passed the bar, a heavy hand thumped down on his shoulder.

"Tommy Ballotti!" The rumbling voice sounded very near the top of Tommy's head. He turned, annoyed. The big man at his elbow, in a suit too small but expensive, grinned at him, red-eyed. "Tommy Ballotti, right?"

"No, you got the wrong—"

"Stop kiddin' me, I know you! You're the best jock at Sunnyvale. I been followin' you for years. Come on, you gotta let me buy you a drink. I'm a couple ahead a' you, but that's okay."

"I'm just on my way—"

"Come on—one drink! I wanna be able to say I bought a drink for Tommy Ballotti."

Never troubled by fans before, Tommy couldn't help feeling slightly thrilled over being recognized. And just wait until Saturday: he'd give this character something to really remember him by! Though in no mood to spend the night at a bar, Tommy decided that obliging the fellow would be the quickest way out. He submitted to the heavy paw on his shoulder and allowed it to steer him to the bartop.

"Attabo!" laughed the man, "There's the guy!"

Tommy rolled his eyes at the smiling bartender and said, "Shot of sour mash."

"Same here!" roared the big man. As the bartender got busy, the fellow turned to Tommy and said somewhat peevishly, "Listen, Ballotti, ya shouldn't raise such a squawk when somebody wants to buy ya a drink. Whaddya, got no time for your

public?" The man leaned his face close. "I mean, a celebrity ain't no celebrity without his public, remember."

Tommy scowled. What was this, sermon night? Damn, if it didn't serve him right for stopping at all!

"Yeah," the man went on, slightly slurring his words. "I'd figure you could spare a fan a couple minutes."

The boxing-glove-sized hand still lay on Tommy's shoulder as the bartender slammed both drinks onto the bar. The big man grabbed both, then handed one to Tommy, announcing loudly, "But I'll still drink to a win—To a winning run by Tommy Ballotti!" Tommy raised the glass to his mouth and upended it. He slapped the empty shot glass and said, "All right, pal, thanks a lot."

He was turning to go when the other suddenly aimed a huge finger at Tommy's chest.

"Hey, Ballotti, what you got there?! Whassat—"

Tommy paused to look down, and saw, incredibly, a dark, wet stain spreading across the front of his shirt.

The big man exploded with laughter. "I heard a' not bein' able to hold your liquor, but jeez!" He looked up and down the bar. "He musta thought he was even shorter than he is—thought his mouth was down there!" He pointed at Tommy's collarbone. "Hey, jockey, wha'ssamatter, you missed your mouth?"

Tommy spun away and went out quickly, the drunk's laughter following him into the street.

In his apartment, throwing the wet shirt into the sink, Tommy dried himself with a towel. What had happened? Of course he hadn't missed his mouth. He'd poured the drink directly toward the back of his throat.

Nevertheless, a moment later the front of his shirt had been drenched. And the smell had been of sour mash.

He went into the bathroom and filled a glass with water. Looking at himself in the mirror a moment, he slowly drained the tumbler. Then he waited. A moment went by and then, before his disbelieving eyes, water droplets began to appear here, there, there . . . Within fifteen seconds his entire torso glistened wetly. He looked as if he'd just stepped from the shower.

Horried, Tommy understood what had happened: the water had seeped through his skin! He felt panicky as he watched the drops roll down his belly.

What was *happening* to him?

He jumped onto the scale, found his weight to be one-oh-four. He took a breath, closed his eyes, and let his body go lax. Doing what he'd done in the gym, he recognized that familiar feeling of total relaxedness. He blinked his eyes open and stared

JOCKEYING FOR TIME

down at the dial. Eighty-one.

Good! He was still in control!

Again he closed his eyes, and when he opened them next, after half a minute, the scale read sixty-four. Sixty-four pounds! Yet he looked and felt no different. He concentrated on tightening the muscles and watched the dial slowly rotate. Clearly shedding weight was easier than gaining it back. By the time he had reached just seventy-two, he was red-faced, his body trembling from the effort.

What a field day it would be for the doctors when they got their hands on him! But of course that would be after the race. Hell, then he could go to the Mayo clinic, if he wanted: he'd be able to afford it.

The phone rang.

Tommy picked up in the kitchen.

"Hey Tommy, kid, what shakes?"

"Oh, hey, Mike, how are you?"

"I'm fine, fine, but Mamma here, she's mad at you. She says you never phone her. She thought you disappeared into thin air."

Tommy smirked. "No, but I *am* involved in some things here. You know how things go."

"No, but I wish I did. All we got goin' here is a party for cousin Mary. Any chance you can get in this weekend?"

Tommy shook his head. "Impossible, Mike. Sorry."

"Yeah, well, it's short notice, I know. You won't be missing much." His brother adopted a conspiratorial tone. "Say, Tommy, you got any big tips yet, so I can make some money?"

Tommy smiled wryly. "As a matter of fact, Mike-o, I got a good tip. Anything put on me to win is a sure thing."

"No-o-o! Are you serious? Really?"

"You heard it."

"Jeez, Tommy, okay. Great! Thanks! I always knew you guys had things rigged up."

"You're completely off the track, Mike. But I'll explain when I see you."

"Tommy, Mamma wants to speak to you. She says she's angry you haven't—Hey, Mamma! Jee-sus! Don't grab—"

There was the sound of grappling for the receiver, then Tommy's mother's voice shrieked from the earpiece. During long distance calls she always shouted.

"Tommy! What's the matter, you never call! And what's this you're not coming home for your cousin's party!"

"I can't, Mamma, I got a big race. Maybe if I knew a few weeks ago—"

"That's no excuse! Family always comes first, you should know that! Now you phone when you get to the airport, we come pick you up."

Tommy was shaking his head. "Can't do it, Ma. But next weekend—"

"Tommy, I'm no young woman. 'Next weekend' isn't for me. You think Papa and I, we going to live forever? I wish! But I don't count on it. So you come for a visit, and you don't make your parents wait."

Tommy again began to speak but his mother cut him off, ending with, "—and Mike will pick you up at the airport. You call as soon as the plane lands." There was a click, and the drone of a dial tone. Tommy returned the receiver to the hook.

Great, now he had his parents teed off at him, too! Didn't it figure? Just when something really important came along, he suddenly found himself with all this crap to put up with. If only he could put them into some kind of suspended animation. Freeze 'em, like a leg of lamb! Well, he'd make it up to them after the race. And to himself, for skipping the doctor just now. Right, after the race, after the race . . .

Standing at the kitchen counter, Tommy started when his cat, Ziti, purred at very close proximity. The jockey looked down to see the pet licking his hand with its tiny, sandpaper tongue. Funny, why hadn't he felt it?

Saturday morning Tommy was up at dawn. He jumped from bed as if wired with electricity. Nervous, excited, eager, but confident, he knew the race was his.

He flicked on the bathroom light to stand barefoot on the cold tile beside the scale. Closing his eyes and concentrating on essentially nothing, on blankness and void and letting his muscles hang loose, he smiled to think he'd gotten even better at achieving his incredible state. He felt hardly surprised when, stepping onto the scale at last, he saw the dial register just fifty-two pounds. Fifty-two! His mount would run as if riderless, as if its saddle were empty!

Tommy breathed deeply and started to tense his muscles, those in his arms, back, neck. As the dial crept snail-slowly back up, he thought, No question about it, losing the weight came much easier than gaining it back. In just a minute or two he found himself exhausted. Much less taxing to let it all fade, slip away.

Like dying, Tommy suddenly imagined.

The scale was up to eighty-four. But the clock said it was time to leave. He'd have to work on getting his weight up to the acceptable minimum on his way to the track. He had to be okay for that final pre-race weigh-in, when jocks running too light were given lead bars for their saddle packs. But immediately after that, Tommy'd turn on the juice, get down to forty, thirty, maybe twenty-five pounds. Who knew the limit? Then after he'd run and won, came the hard part: gaining enough weight so that the *post-run* weigh-in wouldn't give away the whole thing. Well, he'd sweat and strain, bust a gut if he had to, but he'd get his weight up again in those three or



four minutes. Though the horse's sweat and the mud-spatterings—inevitable on even a relatively dry track—would add some weight, he'd need to get up to ninety-eight, or, better, a hundred. It would take a hell of an effort, as gaining the weight back always did. But having made the necessary telephone calls, he could practically smell the money that would soon be his.

In the locker room Tommy kept to one side of everyone else and stalled for time. The other jocks were gone by the time he bent to tie the laces of his paper-weight boots.

Well, now wasn't this going to be fantastic! At last, to win the big one! The fame and the money would change his entire life. He could—

A loud *pinging* sound as he straightened up caught Tommy's attention. His ring, the heavy signet ring he wore, lay on the floor. Funny, it'd never slipped off before. He bent down and slid it back on his finger. Closing the locker, he began fastening the snaps on his shirt. But why was he having so much difficulty? The metal tabs seemed to be slipping through his fingers. Probably nerves were to blame; he was all but trembling with anticipation. But again: that loud *pinging* sound, and the ring lay at his feet. He bent, picked it up, and, putting it on again, watched closely—as the ring slipped not off his finger, but *through* it—as if he were no more substantial than a shadow!

Tommy felt his heart in his throat.

Was that what was happening? He was becoming—*immaterial!* As insubstantial as a ghost...

He felt on the verge of panic, ready to rush straight to the track infirmary to spill everything. Anything, just so they saved him! The doctor and first aid crew would be at center post now and he could go right up, tell them in a calm voice it was an emer—

"*Wintergate Race about to begin.*" The announcer's voice came rasping from the speaker overhead, and Tommy froze like a wild animal caught in a spotlight. "*Jockeys, lead your mounts forward.*"

Then, suddenly, Tommy knew he couldn't let himself think. He couldn't afford to, with twenty years and a golden pot at the end of the rainbow at stake.

He grabbed his crop and helmet and ran out to where his valet would be waiting with the saddle.

"Jeez, I must be getting strong!" said John. "Lifting you just then," he smiled up at Tommy, astride the horse, "I swear, you felt like a sack of feathers!"

Tommy clicked his tongue and the animal took its place.

From the moment the metal gate snapped open, and Bottom Dollar bolted forward as if unencumbered by anything on its back, Tommy knew he was going to show the crowd something like it had never seen. He dug his heels into the animal's ribs, and, as his lead opened one, two, three lengths, the thundering of the others receded to the background. "Ballotti! Ballotti!" blared the loudspeakers, and as Tommy glimpsed the swirl of colors in the stands, he realized that the crowd was on its feet.

And suddenly it wasn't *enough* to have just the race. *Every* race had a winner. This was more than a chance to rake in big bucks on a horse, this was Tommy's shot at fame! He could carve himself a niche in people's memories *now*.

Tommy hunched further forward on the horse's neck and willed himself lighter, lighter still. Ten pounds? Five? He didn't know what he weighed. But the horse's hooves crashed in his ears. A track record, he could set a track—no, a *world* record! Why not?!

The wind ripped at his hands and face, whipped the silks against his skin and tugged like an invisible hand begging him to slow. But Tommy squinted ahead at the line, just ten lengths up the track. Then it stopped—the wind; he couldn't feel it. Just five lengths! He had it, a new rec—

Ten thousand witnesses and no one would wager a guess. Twenty thousand staring eyes and all anyone knows is that the moment Ballotti's about to explode across the finish line, he falls—or at least, his silks come streaming down the back of his animal. The slender crop falls, bounces crazily in the dirt, as if trying to catch up with the riderless horse. The other riders yank their reins sideways, trying desperately to avoid their fallen comrade, but their animals' hooves trample the clothes anyway. And when the dust settles, that's all that remains: Ballotti's colors, lying in the dirt. 17



Magic For Sale

IN TODAY'S WORLD OF
OVER-THE-COUNTER
OCCULT, SORCERERS CAN
SHOP FOR SPELLS AT
THEIR NEIGHBORHOOD
SUPPLY STORE.

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHS
BY MATHEW KOVARY

People may sing about "that old-time religion," but chances are they'd look askance at the modern-day witches who practice a *real* old-time religion: paganism, that pre-Christian system of belief that one observer has called, "the fairest, least dogmatic, least intolerant of faiths."

The very notion of paganism and witchcraft in a time of space travel and computers may seem ludicrous to some, but to its followers, paganism seems a happy alternative to Judeo-Christian doctrines that have become entangled in everything from guilt feelings to foreign policies. It is, in short, a natural religion in a fast-paced and artificial world. Indeed, nature is the object of its worship. Prayers are delivered to the Goddess of Fertility and the satyrlike Horned God, two deities representing the male and female principles found in nature.

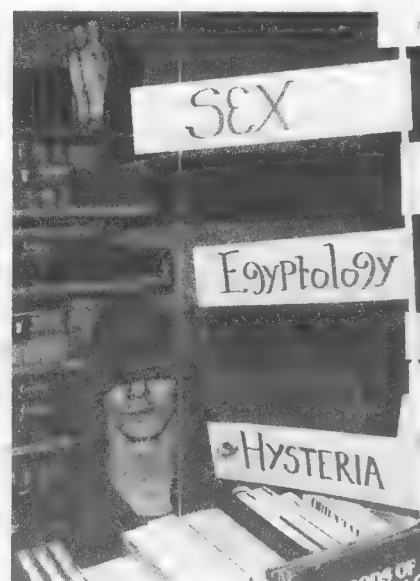
Our popular image of a witch raising a storm, flying on a broomstick, or babbling spells over a smoking cauldron has its roots in the Dark Ages. Modern scholars believe witches to have been the lingering adherents of a pagan religion displaced by Christianity. At the time of the Inquisition, those who still clung to the pagan way of life were forced to flee into wilder parts of the country. Forests, heaths, and deserted woodlands became sanctuaries where the pressure to convert to Christianity did not exist. Elsewhere, homes were searched for magical ointments, pots of herbs, and other incriminating objects as proof that a practicing witch inhabited the premises. Thousands of persons were put to death, many of them tortured into confessions before being executed. Under these pressures, some witches turned their rituals into parodies of Christianity. They chose to worship not God but the devil, replacing the satyr or Horned God of the early fertility cults with Satan. Satanism and black magic may have been a form of rebellion against the Inquisition.



Opposite page: Gargoyle candlesticks frame a human skull at New York's *Magickal Child*. "If the teeth are missing, it's only \$100," says the shop's owner.

Left: A display case contains statues of Egyptian gods, brass censers, inkwells, and bells for summoning the gods.

Magic For Sale



Psychology rubs shoulders with satanism and customers may find themselves rubbing shoulders with hooded attendants in the shop's book section.

Today, fortunately, the majority of witches are neither black magicians nor Satanists. They are followers of "Wicca," a religion which worships nature the same way as the early pagans did, long before their rituals became perverted during the Inquisition. Wiccan practitioners favor "white magic," helping others maintain spiritual wellbeing and, presumably, counteracting the evil spells of black witches.

To work spells, black or white, magicians need tools of the trade. Medieval sorcerers journeyed far and wide for their magical ingredients, searching dark forests and distant valleys, encountering dangers both natural and supernatural, just to gather the roots, herbs, and unmentionable ingredients necessary to complete a spell. Now they need only go down to their neighborhood witchcraft supply shop.

No store better typifies the business of over-the-counter witchcraft than Magickal Child, New York City's largest occult specialty shop. Located deep in the Chelsea section of Manhattan, the store is something of an occult supermarket, carrying everything an up-to-date sorcerer might need in the way of ritual accessories.

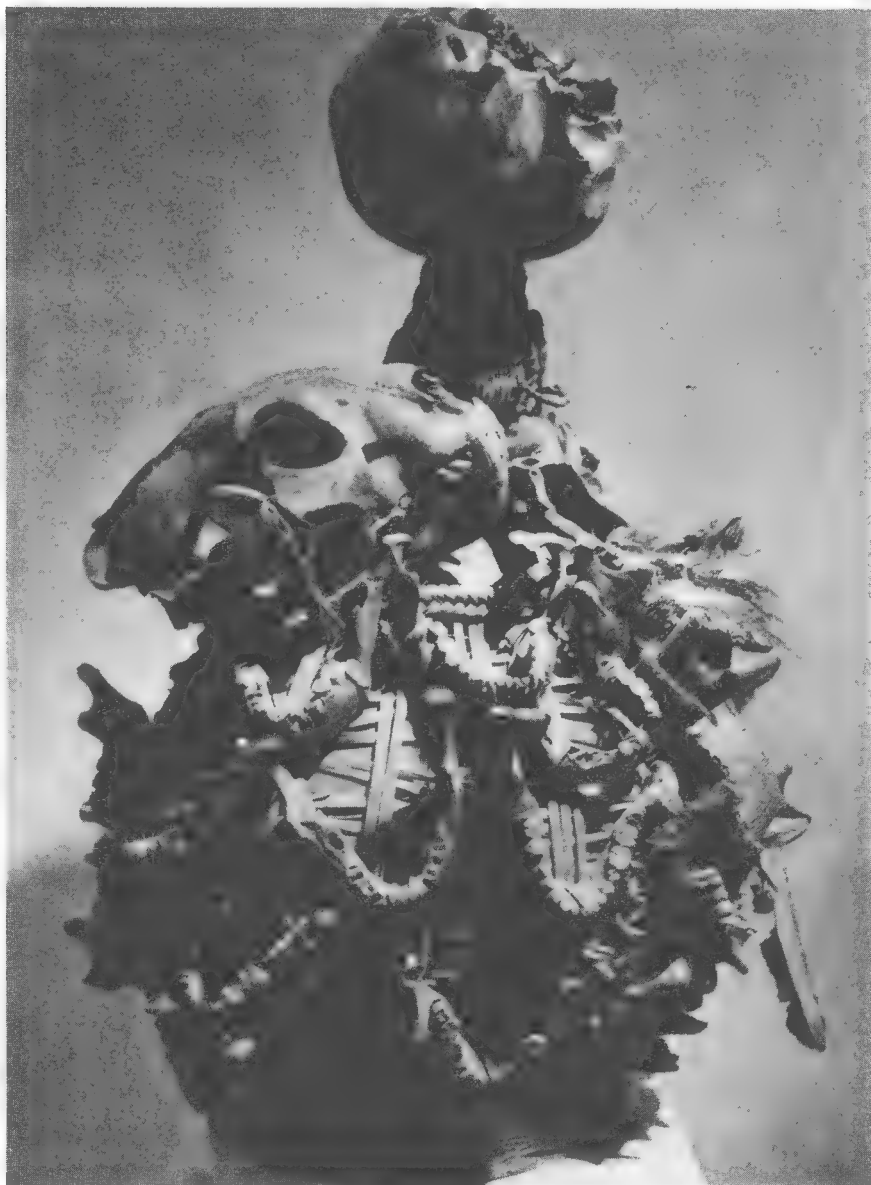
Smoldering frankincense and a no-nonsense message to tourists—THIS IS A RELIGIOUS SUPPLY STORE. BUY OR BYE.—are the first things that greet you as you enter. Further inside, through clouds of incense swirling under a track light, you see human bones, crystal balls, witches' brooms, and mystic daggers used in pagan rituals.

You ask yourself if you belong here. The further in you go the darker it gets, and just as you are about to flee, a mysterious glass box draws your attention. Peering in, you see monkey paws and monkey jaws, bizarre candle-holders, and, on a nearby shelf, a small statue of Pan.

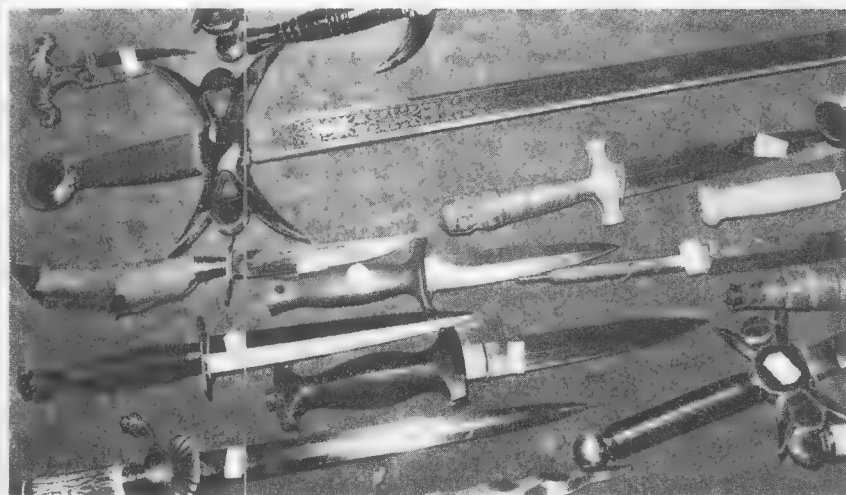
"Blessed be," the man behind the cash register says to a paying customer. He is Herman Slater, the store's owner and founder, who also runs a thriving mail order business, sending bizarre occult items through the mail to places as far away as Moscow and Warsaw.

"I used to have difficulty getting my merchandise into Communist bloc countries," he says, "but recently their customs officials have been getting less strict."

The shelves in his store are stocked with a hundred rare herbs believed to have magical powers. Among the stranger and less savory items for sale are various animal bones used in pagan rituals. You'll also find candlesticks in the shape of gargoyles and magical potions of every description, along with a display of swords and daggers, many of them modeled on ancient pagan artifacts. In back, store helpers who describe themselves as "witches" are busy mixing up potions to sell, and a tarot reader is interpreting cards for a customer. The center of the shop is dominated by occult jewelry displays and book racks with sections on witchcraft, paganism, satanism, and mythology. To appease everyone, there are even sections on Judaism and Christianity. "Many of my customers are Orthodox Jews and Roman Catholics," says



Above: African witchcraft. At war with the Cameroon people, West Africa's Bameleke tribe created this urn around 1850 and adorned it with the jawbones of thirty-five unlucky Cameroon prisoners, adding for additional power the skull of a leopard. A Bameleke witch doctor filled the urn with native fruit juices and human feces, allowed it to ferment, then gave the potion to his warriors to strengthen them before battle. The item (empty, we presume) is now for sale at New York's Sterner-Unangst Gallery.



Left: Tools of the trade at Magickal Childs. Despite their sharp edges, these swords and daggers are more properly used in such ceremonial functions as drawing magic circles and consecrating ritual objects.

Magic For Sale



Top: For the serious occultist, Samuel Weiser's Bookstore on lower Broadway offers enough mystical wisdom for several reincarnated lifetimes.

Above: Also on Broadway but 140 blocks to the north is Harlem's San Lazaro Botanica, typical of the dozens of small religious supply stores that are a fixture in New York's Spanish-speaking neighborhoods, with merchandise ranging from the Catholic to the occult.

The House of Talisman, also in Harlem, is one of the largest *botanicas* in the city—and also sports the longest sign.

Slater. "Rabbis come here for books they can't get in their own religious supply stores."

Love potions are, of course, big sellers in nearly all witchcraft supply stores. They are also available throughout New York's Spanish-speaking neighborhoods in the tiny local *botanicas*, which carry many of the same roots, herbs, and potions available at Magickal Childe, though their windows are more apt to be decorated with large painted statues of Jesus and the saints. Like Magickal Childe, they are listed in the Yellow Pages under "Religious Goods."

At Magickal Childe, there are occasional bargains to be found. You can pick up that human skull you always wanted for \$125. "If the teeth are missing, it's only \$100," says Slater. Standing behind the cash register on a platform about as high as a church pulpit, he can look out over the heads of everyone in the store. "Shoplifters are dealt with swiftly," he says, pointing to three human skulls in a glass cabinet.

With Slater, witchcraft is a business first and a way of life second, but it is a very close second. Every Sunday at four p.m. in a dark room behind a secret sliding bookshelf in back of the store, pagan rituals are held by an incorporated religious sect known as the Earth Star Temple. Slater is neither president nor chairman of the board of that corporation; he is the "high priest," and the public is invited to attend.

Just then, the telephone in the pulpit rings and it is a witch calling Slater for advice. She is new to the practice and asks him how to properly dispose of candles recently used in a ritual. "Put the candles in a paper bag with an orange and leave them in the park," he says. "That way nature can return to nature. Blessed be." 17



Illustration by Brad Hamann

THE TRANSLATOR

by John David Sidley

THE FEELING WAS THERE—BUT IT WOULDN'T SURVIVE
UNLESS SHE FOUND THE WORDS.



I is a translator. I works at the University where my specialty field is No More Used English. It am a good job, since for I have not a husband yet and am still enough young to work for many hours in a day.

One of my much jobs there happens when the doctors and lawyers bring to me the old forms. I am to show them what many No More Used words mean.

One day they bring to me this one:

Extension of Life/Authorization Form No., 298-42-1903 (Rev. '90) ... I, Mark Vallery, age 38, being of sound mind, do hereby entrust my living body to the aforementioned United States government medical representatives for the purpose of being placed in suspended animation until such time as they or their successors deem fit to revitalize my bodily functions, or until such time as my life in suspension would be in peril ...

I tell the doctors and the lawyers this one form am good and that there am no danger from law claims being made by the family of Mr. Mark Vallery (if there am any family members anymore alive) should Mr. Vallery wake up dead.

Mr. Vallery has been had the cancer sickness when he goes into animation instead of to die. We has for long time gotten better the cancer sickness and now can Mr. Vallery be revitalized and gotten better.

I am with excitement, because if there be ever anyone I want to talk with it be Mr. Vallery. For he can help me with my now project at the University—to translate for the screen the great books of him and others before.

Many revitalized people does not like the old books to read. They like only to look on the screen. Mr. Vallery can help me. I will take him to the books-place where no more people go and he can help me.

It am many weeks before I be let to talk with Mr. Vallery. The doctors keep him in the hospital as they do all the revitalized. Some go funny. Many die.

Mr. Vallery has been gotten better. He is now strong with his body. They let me talk with him, hoping our knowing together of books and that I am told to be a nice-faced woman will help to make him feel more good.

"Hello. I am named Kay. I is a translator of No More Used English. I ask the doctors to talk with you. I have so much questions to ask."

"Of all the characters to transcend time ... You're right out of Mickey Spillane, aren't you?"

"Mickey Spillane. I know of him. I try to translate, but think it not worth the time."

"Well ... In that case, I apologize. Please, sit down."

"What book am that you are looking on?"

"It's the Bible. I'm not exactly a zealot, but it was the only damn book anybody had."

"Yes. The others does not like much the books. They like only to look at the screen."

"So I have been told in my briefing sessions. Oral communication is still much the same as I remember—despite a marked degeneration. But the written word has apparently entered into mere oblivion ... sans bite, sans wit, sans sense, sans everything."

"The new language is made to begin after the great war mistake."

"A nuclear accident—but perhaps in this case your term is more appropriate."

"The war accident happens before I am."

"You're lucky. And you're also unlucky. For that ... accident is what caused the loss of the entire scope of literature from Beowulf to ... to me, for that matter. The language I penned only, what,

seventy years ago, is today a foreign tongue. Cancer may be cured in the body of your world, young lady, but its mind has gone malignant."

"You will please to help me look at books?"

"What? To read?"

"To read."

"If you like."

"Very much I like."

"Well, where should we begin? My God! Take a nap for seventy years and the world turns into a kindergarten."

We look at ... we read books together for almost a month as Mr. Vallery stay in the hospital. We read first books for children. Mostly Mr. Vallery read and I hear and when I is home before sleeping I tries to read the books again.

When the doctors tell that Mr. Vallery can leave, I find for him a space to live near where is my space.

We read together much.

Mr. Vallery comes with me to the University to help me translate. Mostly we translate law forms and much old contracts. Mr. Vallery does not like this much. But he is very much good with helping me translate books for the screen.

Mr. Vallery asks me to take him to the biggest books-place. We come through the tall brown doors that open to the ceiling. We walk in and can hear our own footsteps loud. Mr. Vallery stand in the center and turn around, looking at the old books. He shout, "Hello!" at the books and they shout ... echo back and back and back, like he is talking to them, like he is their friend.

Mr. Vallery and I visit the books-place ... the library many weeks after that.

"After I have learned all these books—"

"No, dear, you will never learn all the books."

"Well, after I have learned as many as you, then will I be able to make ... to write my own books?"

"I can't teach you that. But if you have the faculty inside you, I can help bring it out. That's all I can do."

Mark and I began sharing an apartment while I continued working at the University. With his help, our screen translation work has become much in demand. In the evening, however, instead of watching the screen, Mark and I read. Often he surprises me with something he has written, but it makes him sad to know that so few else will know his words. That means a lot to him.

We now write exclusively for the screen and I

"My God! Take a nap for seventy years and the world turns into a kindergarten."

have left my post at the University. Mark and I have moved to a place in the country where we collaborate on translations. We have sold many pieces that have baffled previous translators. Mark is not at all rebellious about translating for the screen.

"Our first consideration is survival. We must write what we must before we can write what we want."

We have agreed to a contract with the screen producers, and now Mark and I will be able to comfortably "crank out," as he terms it, the required number of pieces and still have ample time to enjoy the pleasures of writing and reading for ourselves.

We have also established a network of No More Used English groups across the land. We correspond frequently, and many members have already visited us.

The screen producers have offered us an even more lucrative contract if we would agree to increase our production, but Mark and I have turned them down.

What we want most, we have told them, is freedom; is time.

Time.

Time as we know tonight, as I stand behind Mark with my arms around his shoulders and glance down at what he has written.

It is a letter to our fellow writers, in words untranslatable to the screen.

My friends:

Tonight your backs are sore and your arms are tired, and you would rather read a book than write one.

You question your skill. You even doubt your soul.

Everything has been said before. Every word has been spoken in every language ever heard. Every story has been told a thousand times, and every book been written.

But you. You have never been till now. And the uniqueness that is you makes everything you do, every word you speak, every story you tell, and every book you write the *first*, the original, the never-before-been-told, heard, or written.

You are one of the planters of the seeds of thought. You are one of the writers of the world.

Work. You will still be sore and tired, but you will know what it is to be alive. 17

HE'S NOT CUTE AND FRIENDLY LIKE E.T.
BUT HE DOES HAVE A SOFT SPOT FOR HIS KID.
LET TZ'S JAMES VERNIERE INTRODUCE YOU TO ...

Within the next few months, New Line Cinema (the people who've brought us everything from *Beau Pere* to *Slave of the Cannibal God*) will unleash *XTRO*, a semi-serious, definitely exploitative horror/science fiction film that combines elements from *Alien*, *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, and *Phantasm* into what executive producer Robert Shaye hopes will turn out to be a sensational genre film package.

("XTRO," incidentally, as the film's ad helpfully explains, is scientific jargon for "extraterrestrial." And all you Spielberg suckers thought that was what "E.T." meant!)

XTRO is the story of a man named Sam Phillips (Philip Sayer, one of Tim Curry's successors in the British stage production of *The Rocky Horror Show*) who returns to Earth three years after having been abducted by a UFO. His goal is to implant alien larvae into living human hosts and to claim his young son, Tony (Simon Nash). The problem is that daddy comes back different—and we're not talking about *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*-different or *Invaders from Mars*-different, we're talking about serious metabolic disturbances (see accompanying photos), kind of what happens to you when you listen to too much Laurie Anderson.

Directed by young British filmmaker Harry Bromley Davenport, who helped write the film adaptation of Peter Straub's *Julia* and directed a film called *Whispers of Fear*, *XTRO* promises to rely heavily upon shocks generated by a series of special effects makeup sequences, including one in which the alien creature rapes an Earthling woman. The most inventive effect in the film may well be the first appearance of Sam Phillips as a human-turned-alien. Designed by sketch artist Chris Hobbs, this first manifestation is a lizardlike creature (actually a costumed mime on all fours on his back) that scuttles through the woods in a rural section of England before encountering and raping a human woman. The film's grisliest effect, in which the full-grown Sam emerges in his human form from the raped woman's distended belly, promises to make *XTRO* a gynecological curio, if not a box-office winner.

Later on, in keeping with the metamorphosis motif already exploited in films such as *Alien* and *The Beast Within*, Sam implants alien seeds into his son's neck, triggering another transformation, and son Tony then infects the body of his family's *au pair* girl, turning her into a gigantic egg-producing cocoon. Soon afterward, Tony brings his toys to life via his newfound alien telekinetic powers. Meanwhile, Sam's human body has rapidly begun to decompose, revealing the *XTRO* in its final form. Thus, despite its low budget (under two million dollars), *XTRO* should appeal to aficionados of the genre through sheer special effects, the work of makeup expert Robin Grantham and Britain's NEEFX ("any effects") company.

Actually, *XTRO* could turn out to be a real sleeper, thanks to the unusually literate script by Robert Smith and Ian Cassie which plays upon a primal fear: the fear of alien invasion. Throughout history the "aliens" have

been fellow humans (rampaging Neanderthals, Viking pillagers, Mongol hordes, and the like), but in *XTRO* the invaders are honest-to-God aliens who want to take over the planet by turning humans into living hosts for extraterrestrial seeds (an idea that, many feel, should have been explored more fully in Ridley Scott's *Alien*). *XTRO* may make xenophobes of us all.

It also may turn us into hypochondriacs, for the film exploits the very real biological fear that our bodies themselves are subject to invasion by germs and viruses of all kinds. It is a terror born of our fear of illness, and *XTRO* plays upon it by grotesquely detailing the horrors of the reproductive cycle, of impregnation and birth.

Seen another way, *XTRO* is about the horror of a hopeless relationship between a man and a woman who have become "alien" to one another—an idea marvelously realized in Gene Fowler, Jr.'s *I Married a Monster from Outer Space* and later in Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining*. Although in the film's opening we see Sam Phillips absorbed by a white light, we later hear his wife, Rachel (Bernice Stegers), tell her son that his father abandoned them—thus leaving the opening sequence, which precedes a nightmare of Tony's, teasingly ambiguous. The idea that Sam and Rachel's relationship is a "dead" one is brought home in graphic detail when Sam's human body begins to decompose while he makes love to his wife.

Finally, on another, more touching level, *XTRO* is a kind of fairy tale in which a child fantasizes about the father who abandoned him. The vagueness surrounding Sam's disappearance (was he really abducted by aliens, or did he simply leave?) is appropriate here, too. Seen from the child's point of view, Tony's father didn't abandon him; he was taken away by a flying saucer. (Patti Smith has a similar fantasy about Wilhelm Reich in her song "Birdland.") Not only was daddy abducted, but he returns in a new, magical form, endows his son with supernatural powers, then tries to take the boy back with him. On this level, *XTRO* operates like a classic fairy tale, ameliorating a child's anxiety while reinforcing his sense of worth. And like a classic fairy tale, *XTRO* contains more than its share of cruelty and brutality.

Like Steven Spielberg's *E.T.*, *XTRO* is the story of a boy without a father, and in a way *XTRO*, which should benefit from the tremendous success of Spielberg's science fiction tearjerker because of the similarity of their titles, is *E.T.*'s diabolical twin. Both films feature absent fathers and boys who find surrogates in extraterrestrials. However, the surrogate in *XTRO* is not a reflection of a child's longing for home. He is, in fact, the frightening incarnation of a child's pent-up yearning for another, better place.

Of course, all of this fancy exegesis might amount to so much gobbledygook if *XTRO*'s filmmakers fail to explore the script's multiple levels. One thing is for sure though: If *XTRO* is a success, New Line Cinema will have a sequel in the works *toute de suite*, but don't expect to find *XTRO* dolls beneath your Christmas tree this year. 17

XTRO



Sam Phillips (Philip Sayer) and his son Tony (Simon Nash) are caught in a whirlwind created by an alien spacecraft, which subsequently hurtles off with Sam an unwilling passenger.

Returning to Earth in its first manifestation (top), XTRO's monster turns rapist (below). Designed by artist Chris Hobbs, the XTRO suit was built by makeup expert Robin Grantham and was worn by a mime walking backwards on all fours.



XTRO



Moments later, in one of the film's most grotesque sequences (top), the woman's belly grows impossibly distended and she gives birth to a full-grown Sam Phillips in human form.

After being infected by his father via a paternal kiss, Tony (above) injects alien seeds into the stomach of his family's *au pair* girl (Maryam D'Abo).



Tony brings a dwarf-sized toy clown to life with the telekinetic powers he's suddenly developed.



In a scene reminiscent of one ultimately edited from *Allen*, the hapless *au pair* girl is transformed into a gigantic egg-producing cocoon hanging in the shower.



While making love to his wife, Sam's body begins to show some ill effects as the next stage in the XTRO life-cycle draws near.



As his human form deteriorates, the manifestation is revealed.



A side view of XTRO's skull in its final form, a two-legged version of the first creature.

XTRO



Now fully transformed (left), Sam offers a clawlike hand to his son (below), who is also showing signs of an alien metamorphosis.



While Tony's mother watches in horror, the XTRO and his son walk into a clearing to meet the alien spacecraft that will take them away to their new home.

L.P. Hartley

by Jack Sullivan

FEW WROTE HORROR TALES
AS ELEGANTLY AS THE AUTHOR
OF 'THE GO-BETWEEN.'
FEW POSSESSED A VISION
• QUITE SO DARK.



From *The Complete Short Stories of L.P. Hartley* (London: Hamish Hamilton, Ltd.)

The ghost story, wrote L. P. Hartley, is "if not the highest, certainly the most exacting form of literary art." No writer of ghost stories was more exacting than Hartley himself. When he died in 1972 at the age of seventy-six, Leslie Poles Hartley left behind a fifty-year legacy of ghost and horror fiction that, from the standpoint of stylistic finesse, ranks with the very best in the English language. Even the stories that disappoint or fail to frighten leave us with a succession of exquisitely shaped sentences, one or two perfectly sketched characters, several sharp insights into the oddities of human behavior, some witty and sinister dialogue, and, above all, the resonance of an unfailingly musical narrative voice. The stories that do terrify us offer a uniquely sophisticated blend of supernatural menace and childhood nostalgia.

Hartley is best known not for his ghost stories but for a distinguished series of novels such as *The Go-Between*, *The Hireling*, and *Eustace and Hilda*, novels of manners and morals which usually depict middle or lower-class characters who penetrate,

with frequently tragic results, the world of the aristocracy. Hartley was also a noted essayist, book reviewer, and—in the judgment of J. B. Priestley—the best critic in England. His sedate life yielded none of the spectacular morbidities that stereotypically characterize writers with a predilection for horror. As Anne Mulkeen puts it in her 1974 book on Hartley, *Wild Thyme, Winter Lightning* (Wayne State University Press), "Apart from his experience as a gunner in World War I, Hartley had lived his part of the century as a typical Harrow-and-Balliol-bred British gentleman, who for years reviewed books for the *Spectator*, *Saturday Review*, and the *Observer*, and quietly wrote his own on the side."

In other words, Hartley was a genuine man of letters, one of a vanishing species for whom fiction, criticism, philosophy, and life itself were all part of the same artistic enterprise. An incorrigibly bookish writer, Hartley was capable of admitting, "I have been more actively frightened by a book than by anything that has happened to me in

my own experience." "W.S.," one of Hartley's most ingenious late stories, sums up this attitude by presenting books as more dangerous, more lifelike than anything in life itself.

From the beginning of his career, Hartley evinced a strong interest in horror. His first collection of stories, published in 1924, was called *Night Fears*, a title suggestive of Hartley's theory of "fear-fulfillment," which holds that obsessive fears act as a fundamental creative force in the act of writing: "To put these down on paper gives relief . . . It is a kind of insurance against the future. When we have imagined the worst that can happen, and embodied it in a story, we feel we have stolen a march on fate, inoculated ourselves, as it were, against disaster."

One of the special pleasures of reading Hartley is that we never know for sure whether the supernatural is going to appear in a given work. Even the ostensibly nonsupernatural novels are apt to surprise us. *The Go-Between*, for example, is riddled with threatening omens, 'curses, and "sensuous premonitions." No

one who reads this novel—surely Hartley's masterpiece—will ever forget the child narrator's vision of the "hungry" Deadly Nightshade or of the sexual act as "a shadow on the wall that opened and closed like an umbrella." The trilogy *Eustace and Hilda*, to our shock and delight, delivers a full-blown ghost scene near its end. In the stories, a given piece may seem for a while to be purely psychological, only to take a final, fearful leap into the fantastic; whereas another may be saturated with spectral atmosphere and yet ultimately unleash purely material horrors.

The title story in *Night Fears* is a concise, concentrated *tour de force* that hits the "fear-fulfillment" motif in several keys at once: an insomniac night watchman converses with a mysterious, faceless figure in the darkness who Socratically manages to call all the life-giving supports in the night watchman's life—the adequacy of his job, the love of his children, the fidelity of his wife, the solidity of his sanity—into such dire question that the night watchman, in terror and despair, cuts his own throat. The spectral figure at first seems to be only a psychological, Poe-like projection of paranoia, yet after the night watchman's suicide, it skulks back into a blind alley, still very much alive, "leaving a track of dark, irregular footprints." This strategy of intensifying fears into actual supernatural manifestations becomes, in later stories like "The Thought" and "A Change of Ownership," a Hartley trademark.

Yet in "The Island," the longest and most sumptuous story in *Night Fears*, the opposite happens. Here is a story that virtually vibrates with the ghostly and the sinister—with spectral whispers and shadows in an empty house on a misty island—yet there is no ghost.

Indeed, the most vividly composed description of "night fears" in the collection comes from "A Summons," a splendidly ironic atmosphere piece—the closest Hartley gets to the plotless "modernism" of Joyce and Beckett—in which nothing happens outside the protagonist's disturbed and disturbing thoughts as he lies awake wondering whether to go comfort his little sister next door who suffers, he thinks, from an overly fearful and morbid imagination:

The night was still. The ridiculous

acorn-shaped appendage to the blind-cord no longer flapped in its eddying elliptical movement. And what of that odious bluebottle fly? Doubtless it had crept into some corner, a fold in the valance, perhaps. I could not believe it was asleep. It might be scratching itself with one foot, in the way flies have; a curious gesture that seems to imply a kind of equivocal familiarity with oneself—an insulting salute, a greeting one couldn't possibly acknowledge. Flies have a flair for putrefaction; what strange prescience had inspired its sharp, virulent rushes and brought that note of deadly exaltation into its buzz? It had been all I could do to keep the creature off my face. Now it was biding its time, but my ears were apprehensive for the renewal of its message of mortality, its monotonous *memento mori*.

The commanding, near-hallucinatory sense of the particular in this passage later finds its way into more fully developed, elaborately plotted ghost stories, most of which can be found in *The Killing Bottle* (1932) and the legendary Arkham House collection, *The Travelling Grave* (1948). Hartley's secret in these stories, which enables him to fuse the fantastic with the everyday, is his peerless ability to recapture a sense of childhood terror and bedazzlement. "The trouble with many ghost stories," Hartley once wrote, "is that, though the writer has quite a good idea of what constitutes an alarming ghost, he cannot make it seem a natural product of its environment. He has forgotten the sensations of his childhood; he cannot remember when a dressing-gown hung over the end of the bed looked like a witch crouching or a man with a broken neck."

Hartley himself seems to be always seeing terror in a dressing gown, and his favorite technique is the projection of childhood sensations into adult settings. In "A Change of Ownership," a doppelganger tale, the doomed hero reexperiences his boyhood, a time when he "had been so ill at ease in his own home that the most familiar objects, a linen-press or a waste-paper basket, had been full of menace for him." In "A Visitor from Down Under," which reads like a horrific fairy tale, a man pursued by a peculiarly frozen ghost (ice is always associated with spirits of the dead in Hartley) dreams of a ghastly procession of children who intone his name as they play a deadly version of his favorite childhood game,

"Oranges and Lemons": "Here is a candle to light you to bed,/And here comes a chopper to chop off your head/Chop-chop-chop."

In his introduction to one of Cynthia Asquith's famous spook anthologies (collections which spawned both "The Travelling Grave" and "W. S."), Hartley treats the idea of regression with typical irony and insouciance: "Even the most impassioned devotee of the ghost story would admit that the taste for it is slightly abnormal, a survival, perhaps, from adolescence; a disease of deficiency suffered by those whose lives and imaginations do not react satisfactorily to normal experience and require an extra thrill." Again, however, Hartley refuses to segregate macabre from mainstream fiction. In a letter he writes that "nearly all art is a product of maladjustment, or an inward conflict of some kind: it is a sort of compensation that the properly adjusted man is not in need of."

Hartley's characters are rarely "properly adjusted" either. His heroes tend to be lonely, passive, hyperconservative bachelors, like Jimmy Rintoul in "The Killing Bottle," a man in his early thirties who expects a great deal from life and "never went to bed without the sense of having missed it." A collector of rare butterflies, Jimmy finds himself, in a characteristic twist of Hartley irony, ensnared in a bottlelike room maintained by a nature lover with an exacting sense of justice.

Another typical Hartley hero is the vulnerable, foppish Hugh Curtis, who becomes the victim of a cruel, jaded antiquarian named Dick Munt in "The Travelling Grave." The title refers to Munt's favorite antiquarian object, a bizarre mobile killing machine, equipped with razor-sharp teeth, which has "no settled direction" and moves "all ways at once, like a crab"—a metaphor for the mobility and capriciousness of death.

Yet its starkness is not the most immediately striking feature of "The Travelling Grave." What we are first struck by is the story's remarkable fusion of humor and horror. In one memorable scene of graveyard humor, a character named Valentine, thinking that Munt collects perambulators, has a bizarre conversation with Munt, who mistakenly thinks that Valentine knows he collects coffins. The unintentional analogies be-



"... riddled with threatening omens, curses, and 'sensuous premonitions.'" A late-Victorian schoolboy (Dominic Guard, left) spends his summer carrying illicit love letters from a daughter of the gentry to a rough-hewn farmer (Alan Bates) in the 1971 film version of *The Go-Between*.

tween babies and corpses is a virtuosos demonstration of Hartley's gloriously twisted sense of life:

"They perform at one time or another," said Valentine, enjoying himself enormously, "an essential service for us all. ... Personally I always try to avoid them. ... But one meets them every day in the street and—here of course."

"Why do you try to avoid them?" asked Munt rather grimly.

"Since you think about them, and dote upon them, and collect them from all corners of the earth, it pains me to have to say it," said Valentine with relish, "but I do not care to contemplate lumps of flesh lacking the spirit that makes flesh tolerable. ... But of course by making a corner in the things, you do discourage the whole business. Being exhibits they have to stand idle, don't they? You keep them empty?"

Bettisher started up in his chair, but Munt held out a pallid hand and murmured in a stifled voice:

"Yes, that is, most of them are."

Valentine clapped his hands in ecstasy.

"But some are not? Oh, but that's too ingenious of you. To think of the darlings lying there quite still, not able to lift a finger, much less scream! A sort of mannequin parade!"

"They certainly seem more complete with an occupant," Munt observed.

As in the fiction of Ambrose Bierce, M. R. James, and others, humor is not so much a relief from horror as another dimension of it. (As Bierce puts it, "A jest in the death chamber conquers by surprise.") In "Feet Foremost," Hartley's most traditional ghost story, the delightfully dismissive jokes about the ghost

make its appearance far more credible than the solemn theorizing that occurs in more occultist tales. "Poor thing," exclaims one character upon hearing that the avenging ghost was a young woman who was tortured and murdered by her husband. "So now she haunts the place. I suppose it's the nature of ghosts to linger where they've suffered, but it seems illogical to me. I should want to go somewhere else."

Similarly, the witty and facetious remarks made by various characters about Randolph Verdew, the psychotic nature lover in "The Killing Bottle," take the reader, like Jimmy Rintoul, totally off guard. "He's interested in all sorts of philanthropical societies," says Randolph's brother to Jimmy. "He's always helping them to prevent something. He hasn't prevented you, though, you naughty fellow."

Sooner or later, however, even the most civilized and urbane tale of terror must get down to business and deliver, in Hartley's words, "a shock of surprise and horror, a tingling of the spine." In "The Killing Bottle," the turning point comes when the slow death of one of Jimmy's butterflies is described in Hartley's most meticulous and horrifying prose. As we watch the terrible scene with Randolph, we are manipulated not only into taking his horror seriously but into sympathizing with his revenge:

The butterfly must have been stronger than it looked. . . . Its frantic flutterings could be heard through the thick

walls of its glass prison. It clung to the cotton wool, pressed itself into corners, its straining, delicate tongue coiling and uncoiling in the effort to suck in a breath of living air. Now it was weakening. It fell from the cotton-wool and lay with its back on the plaster slab. It jolted itself up and down and when strength for this movement failed, it clawed the air with its thin legs as though pedaling an imaginary bicycle. Suddenly, with a violent spasm, it gave birth to a thick cluster of yellowish eggs. Its body twitched once or twice and at last lay still. . . . The look of horrified excitement whose vanishing vestige he had seen a moment before, lay full and undisguised upon Randolph Verdew's face.

Much of the power of "The Killing Bottle" derives from Hartley's insidious skill in making the killing of the butterfly seem an act of heartless murder. Typically, the scene is envisioned from the mortified point of view of a sensitive child, though projected onto an adult character. A similar scene, but one actually involving children, opens *The Shrimp and the Anemone* (1944), the first novel in Hartley's masterful trilogy *Eustace and Hilda*, a lengthy work which depicts a touching but destructive brother-sister relationship traced from childhood to death. In the opening, Eustace Cherrington, a passive, hypersensitive little boy, comes upon an anemone in a pool eating a struggling shrimp by gradually sucking it. "A tumult arose in Eustace's breast. His heart bled for the shrimp, he longed to rescue it; but, on the other hand, how could he bear to rob the anemone of its dinner? . . . But while he debated the unswallowed part of the shrimp grew perceptibly smaller."

Hilda, Eustace's domineering, beautiful sister, comes forcibly to the rescue and pulls the shrimp out—but its pathetically mangled head shows the reprieve to be too late. Eustace trembles with fascination and horror, but there is worse to come: "As a result of Hilda's forcible interference with its meal, the anemone had been partially disembowelled; it could not give up its prey without letting its digestive apparatus go too." Eustace, whose mind has "no power to consider an unmixed evil," bursts into tears at Hilda's seeming calmness, her "ruthless recognition of an evil principle at the back of the anemone affair."

This "evil principle," a basic cruelty and tragedy at the base of ex-

istence, haunts all of Hartley's fiction, but nowhere is it more nightmarish than in the ending of *Eustace and Hilda* (1947), the final novel in the trilogy, when Eustace, now a spectacularly repressed young man with a weak heart, has an apocalyptic dream of the anemone that summarizes his sacrificial passivity to Hilda's lifelong domination. (I should caution anyone who plans to read the trilogy and doesn't want the ending given away to skip the next two paragraphs.)

(It was) the same anemone as before, without a doubt, but there was no shrimp in its mouth. ... Then he knew what he must do. Taking off his shoes and socks, he waded into the water. The water was bitterly cold; but colder still were the lips of the anemone as they closed around his finger. "I shall wake up now," thought Eustace, who had wakened from many dreams.

But the cold crept onwards and he did not wake.

Earlier, in Venice, Eustace has a premonition of this icy end when he sees a woman in black on a staircase. He describes the woman to the maid, who shrieks "*Ha visto la larva!*" and flees the room. Eustace wonders whether the woman in black might have been looking for a caterpillar:

Larva, larva, it was a Latin word. Groping among his classical studies, his memory brought out something pale with the milky glow of phosphorescence, something in an incomplete, provisional state of being.

Now it came to him. *Larva* was a ghost. He had seen a ghost.

Both exquisite and fearful, this ghost scene is only the most explicit manifestation of a timeless, transcendental world that can be experienced through an encounter with the supernatural, or simply with childhood. In a scene near the end, Eustace revisits a favorite childhood haunt and looks up at a familiar church window, "its dark glass sparkling with a hundred points of light," recreating "the mood of so many years ago: his being kindled and divided into tongues of fire that seared the walls of sense with a sweet agony."

In Hartley's universe, this mystical world is set against a subtly brutal social reality of endless humiliations and power plays—the relentless domination of Eustace by Hilda, the sado-masochistic relation-

ship between dentist and patient in "A Visit to the Dentist," the deadly cruel joke perpetrated on Hugh Curtis by his diabolical host in "The Travelling Grave," the humiliation of a timid gentleman bather by a rustic who steals his clothes in "A Condition of Release," the beating and degradation of a weak suitor through the machinations of a sadistic spinster in "St. George and the Dragon"—the list stretches on endlessly and depressingly. The opposition of a cynical, near-Hobbesian view of human behavior against a childlike vision of rapture and wonder constitutes the basic tension of this rich and remarkable fiction. Hartley's praise of Hawthorne for his complexity, his "gift of saying two opposite things at the same time," applies equally to his own work.

Hartley's double vision is most fascinating and significant in his attitude toward fear. In "Night Fears," "The Cotillion," and "The Thought," fear is an enervating, deadly force.

But in the larger scheme, fear—at least the enchanted fear of childhood, imagination, and art—is a life-giving antidote to the grayness and meanness of everyday existence. Even Eustace, the most tragic of Hartley's lonely, timid heroes, is redeemed by his imaginative capacity to feel fear:

He felt the old contradiction of the heart that the strangeness in the outward forms of things once gave him: the tingling sense of fear, the nimbus of danger surrounding the unknown which had harassed his imagination but enriched its life, which was the medium, the condition, of his seeing, bereft of which his vision was emptier—far emptier, indeed, than that of people who had never known the stimulus of fear.

It is precisely those who know and love this "tingling sense of fear," this "nimbus of danger surrounding the unknown," for whom Hartley writes, and to whom he bequeathed a rigorous standard of intelligence and artfulness unsurpassed by anyone in spectral literature. 17

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W.S.

by L. P. Hartley

HE WAS THE PSYCHOPATH THAT EVERY WRITER FEARS.
AND HE WAS GETTING CLOSER.

The first postcard came from Forfar. "I thought you might like a picture of Forfar," it said. "You have always been so interested in Scotland, and that is one reason why I am interested in you. I have enjoyed all your books, but do you really get to grips with people? I doubt it. Try to think of this as a handshake from your devoted admirer, W. S."

Like other novelists, Walter Streeter was used to getting communications from strangers. Usually they were friendly but sometimes they were critical. In either case he always answered them, for he was conscientious. But answering them took up the time and energy he needed for his writing, so that he was rather relieved that W. S. had given no address. The photograph of Forfar was uninteresting and he tore it up. His anonymous correspondent's criticism, however, lingered in his mind. Did he really fail to come to grips with his characters? Perhaps he did. He was aware that in most cases they were either projections of his own personality or, in different forms, the antithesis of it. The Me and the Not Me. Perhaps W. S. had spotted this. Not for the first time Walter made a vow to be more objective.

About ten days later arrived another postcard, this time from Berwick-on-Tweed. "What do you think of Berwick-on-Tweed?" it said. "Like you, it's on the Border. I hope this doesn't sound rude. I

don't mean that you are a borderline case! You know how much I admire your stories. Some people call them other-worldly. I think you should plump for one world or the other. Another firm handshake from W. S."

Walter Streeter pondered over this and began to wonder about the sender. Was his correspondent a man or a woman? It looked like a man's handwriting—commercial, unself-conscious—and the criticism was like a man's. On the other hand, it was like a woman to probe—to want to make him feel at the same time flattered and unsure of himself. He felt the faint stirrings of curiosity but soon dismissed them; he was not a man to experiment with acquaintances. Still it was odd to think of this unknown person speculating about him, sizing him up. Other-worldly, indeed! He reread the last two chapters he had written. Perhaps they didn't have their feet firm on the ground. Perhaps he was too ready to escape, as other novelists were nowadays, into an ambiguous world, a world where the conscious mind did not have things too much its own way. But did that matter? He threw the picture of Berwick-on-Tweed into his November fire and tried to write; but the words came haltingly, as though contending with an extra-strong barrier of self-criticism. And as the days passed he became uncomfortably aware of self-division, as though someone had taken hold of his



personality and was pulling it apart. His work was no longer homogeneous, there were two strains in it, unreconciled and opposing, and it went much slower as he tried to resolve the discord. Never mind, he thought: perhaps I was getting into a groove. These difficulties may be growing pains, I may have tapped a new source of supply. If only I could correlate the two and make their conflict fruitful, as many artists have!

The third postcard showed a picture of York Minster. "I know you are interested in cathedrals," it said. "I'm sure this isn't a sign of megalomania in your case, but smaller churches are sometimes more rewarding. I'm seeing a good many churches on my way south. Are you busy writing or are you looking round for ideas? Another hearty handshake from your friend W. S."

It was true that Walter Streeter was interested in cathedrals. Lincoln Cathedral had been the subject of one of his youthful fantasies and he had written about it in a travel book. And it was also true that he admired mere size and was inclined to undervalue parish churches. But how could W. S. have known that? And was it really a sign of megalomania? And who was W. S. anyhow?

For the first time it struck him that the initials were his own. No, not for the first time. He had noticed it before, but they were such commonplace initials; they were Gilbert's, they were Maugham's, they were Shakespeare's—a common possession. Anyone might have them. Yet now it seemed to him an odd coincidence; and the idea came into his mind—suppose I have been writing postcards to myself? People did such things, especially people with split personalities. Not that he was one, of course. And yet there were these unexplained developments—the cleavage in his writing, which had now extended from his thought to his style, making one paragraph languorous with semicolons and subordinate clauses, and another sharp and incisive with main verbs and full-stops.

He looked at the handwriting again. It had seemed the perfection of ordinariness—anybody's hand—so ordinary as perhaps to be disguised. Now he fancied he saw in it resemblances to his own. He was just going to pitch the postcard in the fire when suddenly he decided not to. I'll show it to somebody, he thought.

His friend said, "My dear fellow, it's all quite plain. The woman's a lunatic. I'm sure it's a woman. She has probably fallen in love with you and wants to make you interested in her. I should pay no attention whatsoever. People whose names are mentioned in the papers are always getting letters from lunatics. If they worry you, destroy them without reading them. That sort of person is often a little psychic, and if she senses that she's getting a rise out of you she'll go on."

For a moment Walter Streeter felt reassured. A woman, a little mouse-like creature, who had somehow taken a fancy to him! What was there to feel uneasy about in that? It was really rather sweet and touching, and he began to think of her and wonder what she looked like. What did it matter if she was a little mad? Then his subconscious mind, searching for something to torment him with, and assuming the authority of logic, said: Supposing those postcards are a lunatic's and you are writing them to yourself, doesn't it follow that you must be a lunatic too?

He tried to put the thought away from him; he tried to destroy the postcard as he had the others. But something in him wanted to preserve it. It had become a piece of him, he felt. Yielding to an irresistible compulsion, which he dreaded, he found himself putting it behind the clock on the chimney-piece. He couldn't see it but he knew that it was there.

He now had to admit to himself that the postcard business had become a leading factor in his life. It had created a new area of thoughts and feelings and they were most unhelpful. His being was strung up in expectation of the next postcard.

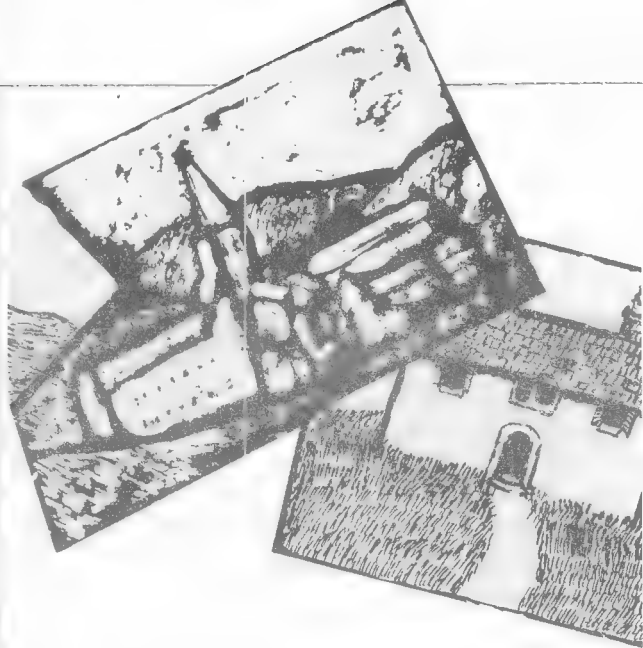
Yet when it came it took him, as the others had, completely by surprise. He could not bring himself to look at the picture. "I hope you are well and would like a postcard from Coventry," he read. "Have you ever been sent to Coventry? I have—in fact you sent me there. It isn't a pleasant experience, I can tell you. I am getting nearer. Perhaps we shall come to grips after all. I advised you to come to grips with your characters, didn't I? Have I given you any new ideas? If I have you ought to thank me, for they are what novelists want, I understand. I have been rereading your novels, living in them, I might say. Another hard handshake. As always, W. S."

A wave of panic surged up in Walter Streeter. How was it that he had never noticed, all this time, the most significant fact about the postcards—that each one came from a place geographically closer to him than the last? "I am coming nearer." Had his mind, unconsciously self-protective, worn blinkers? If it had, he wished he could put them back. He took an atlas and idly traced out W. S.'s itinerary. An interval of eighty miles or so seemed to separate the stopping-places. Walter lived in a large West Country town about ninety miles from Coventry.

Should he show the postcards to an alienist? But what could an alienist tell him? He would not know what Walter wanted to know, whether he had anything to fear from W. S.

Better go to the police. The police were used to dealing with poison-pens. If they laughed at him, so much the better.

They did not laugh, however. They said they



thought the postcards were a hoax and that W. S. would never show up in the flesh. Then they asked if there was anyone who had a grudge against him. "No one that I know of," Walter said. They, too, took the view that the writer was probably a woman. They told him not to worry but to let them know if further postcards came.

A little comforted, Walter went home. The talk with the police had done him good. He thought it over. It was quite true what he had told them—that he had no enemies. He was not a man of strong personal feelings; such feelings as he had went into his books. In his books he had drawn some pretty nasty characters. Not of recent years, however. Of recent years he had felt a reluctance to draw a very bad man or woman: he thought it morally irresponsible and artistically unconvincing, too. There was good in everyone: Iagos were a myth. Latterly—but he had to admit that it was several weeks since he laid pen to paper, so much had this ridiculous business of the postcards weighed upon his mind—if he had to draw a really wicked person he represented him as a Communist or a Nazi—someone who had deliberately put off his human characteristics. But in the past, when he was younger and more inclined to see things as black or white, he had let himself go once or twice. He did not remember his old books very well but there was a character in one, *The Outcast*, into whom he had really got his knife. He had written about him with extreme vindictiveness, just as if he was a real person whom he was trying to show up. He had experienced a curious pleasure in attributing every kind of wickedness to this man. He never gave him the benefit of the doubt. He had never felt a twinge of pity for him, even when he paid the penalty for his misdeeds on the gallows. He had so worked himself up that the idea of this dark creature, creeping about brimful of malevolence, had almost frightened him.

Odd that he couldn't remember the man's name.

He took the book down from the shelf and turned the pages—even now they affected him uncomfortably. Yes, here it was, William ... William ... he would have to look back to find the

surname. William Stainsforth.

His own initials.

Walter did not think the coincidence meant anything but it coloured his mind and weakened its resistance to his obsession. So uneasy was he that when the next postcard came it came as a relief.

"I am quite close now," he read, and involuntarily he turned the postcard over. The glorious central tower of Gloucester Cathedral met his eye. He stared at it as if it could tell him something, then with an effort went on reading. "My movements, as you may have guessed, are not quite under my control, but all being well I look forward to seeing you sometime this weekend. Then we can really come to grips. I wonder if you'll recognize me! It won't be the first time you have given me hospitality. My hand feels a bit cold tonight, but my handshake will be just as hearty. As always, W. S."

"P.S. Does Gloucester remind you of anything? Gloucester gaol?"

Walter took the postcard straight to the police station, and asked if he could have police protection over the weekend. The officer in charge smiled at him and said he was quite sure it was a hoax; but he would tell someone to keep an eye on the premises.

"You still have no idea who it could be?" he asked.

Walter shook his head.

It was Tuesday; Walter Streeter had plenty of time to think about the weekend. At first he felt he would not be able to live through the interval, but strange to say his confidence increased instead of waning. He set himself to work as though he *could* work, and presently he found he could—differently from before, and, he thought, better. It was as though the nervous strain he had been living under had, like an acid, dissolved a layer of non-conductive thought that came between him and his subject: he was nearer to it now, and his characters, instead of obeying woodenly his stage directions, responded wholeheartedly and with all their beings to the tests he put them to. So passed the days, and the dawn of Friday seemed like any other day until something jerked him out of his self-induced trance and suddenly he asked himself, "When does a weekend begin?"

A long weekend begins on Friday. At that his panic returned. He went to the street door and looked out. It was a suburban, unfrequented street of detached Regency houses like his own. They had tall square gateposts, some crowned with semi-circular iron brackets holding lanterns. Most of these were out of repair: only two or three were ever lit. A car went slowly down the street; some people crossed it: everything was normal.

Several times that day he went to look and saw nothing unusual, and when Saturday came, bringing no postcard, his panic had almost subsided.



He nearly rang up the police station to tell them not to bother to send anyone after all.

They were as good as their word: they did send someone. Between tea and dinner, the time when weekend guests most commonly arrive, Walter went to the door and there, between two unlit gateposts, he saw a policeman standing—the first policeman he had ever seen in Charlotte Street. At the sight, and at the relief it brought him, he realized how anxious he had been. Now he felt safer than he had ever felt in his life, and also a little ashamed at having given extra trouble to a hard-worked body of men. Should he go and speak to his unknown guardian, offer him a cup of tea or a drink? It would be nice to hear him laugh at Walter's fancies. But no—somehow he felt his security the greater when its source was impersonal and anonymous. "P. C. Smith" was somehow less impressive than "police protection."

Several times from an upper window (he didn't like to open the door and stare) he made sure that his guardian was still there; and once, for added proof, he asked his housekeeper to verify the strange phenomenon. Disappointingly, she came back saying she had seen no policeman; but she was not very good at seeing things, and when Walter went a few minutes later he saw him plain enough. The man must walk about, of course; perhaps he had been taking a stroll when Mrs. Kendal looked.

It was contrary to his routine to work after dinner but tonight he did, he felt so much in the vein. Indeed, a sort of exaltation possessed him; the words ran off his pen; it would be foolish to check the creative impulse for the sake of a little extra sleep. On, on. They were right who said the small hours were the time to work. When his housekeeper came in to say goodnight he scarcely raised his eyes.

In the warm, snug little room the silence purred around him like a kettle. He did not even hear the doorbell till it had been ringing for some time.

A visitor at this hour?

His knees trembling, he went to the door, scarcely knowing what he expected to find; so what was his relief on opening it, to see the doorway filled by the tall figure of a policeman. Without waiting for the man to speak—

"Come in, come in, my dear fellow," he exclaimed. He held his hand out, but the policeman did

not take it. "You must have been very cold standing out there. I didn't know that it was snowing, though," he added, seeing the snowflakes on the policeman's cape and helmet. "Come in and warm yourself."

"Thanks," said the policeman. "I don't mind if I do."

Walter knew enough of the phrases used by men of the policeman's stamp not to take this for a grudging acceptance. "This way," he prattled on. "I was writing in my study. By Jove, it is cold, I'll turn the gas on more. Now won't you take your traps off, and make yourself at home?"

"I can't stay long," the policeman said. "I've got a job to do, as *you* know."

"Oh yes," said Walter, "such a silly job, a sinecure." He stopped, wondering if the policeman would know what a sinecure was. "I suppose you know what it's about—the postcards?"

The policeman nodded.

"But nothing can happen to me as long as you are here," said Walter. "I shall be as safe ... as safe as houses. Stay as long as you can, and have a drink."

"I never drink on duty," said the policeman. Still in his cape and helmet, he looked round. "So this is where you work," he said.

"Yes, I was writing when you rang."

"Some poor devil's for it, I expect," the policeman said.

"Oh, why?" Walter was hurt by his unfriendly tone, and noticed how hard his gooseberry eyes were.

"I'll tell you in a minute," said the policeman, and then the telephone bell rang. Walter excused himself and hurried from the room.

"This is the police station," said a voice. "Is that Mr. Streeter?"

Walter said it was.

"Well, Mr. Streeter, how is everything at your place? All right, I hope? I'll tell you why I ask. I'm sorry to say we quite forgot about that little job we were going to do for you. Bad coordination, I'm afraid."

"But," said Walter, "you did send someone."

"No, Mr. Streeter, I'm afraid we didn't."

"But there's a policeman here, here in this very house."

There was a pause, then his interlocuter said, in a less casual voice: "He can't be one of our chaps. Did you see his number by any chance?"

"No."

A longer pause and then the voice said:

"Would you like us to send somebody now?"

"Yes, p ... please."

"All right then, we'll be with you in a jiffy."

Walter put back the receiver. What now? he asked himself. Should he barricade the door? Should

he run out into the street? Should he try to rouse his housekeeper? A policeman of any sort was a formidable proposition, but a rogue policeman! How long would it take the real police to come? A jiffy, they had said. What was a jiffy in terms of minutes? While he was debating the door opened and his guest came in.

"No room's private when the street door's once passed," he said. "Had you forgotten I was a policeman?"

"Was?" said Walter, edging away from him. "You are a policeman."

"I have been other things as well," the policeman said. "Thief, pimp, blackmailer, not to mention murderer. You should know."

The policeman, if such he was, seemed to be moving towards him and Walter suddenly became alive to the importance of small distances—the distance from the sideboard to the table, the distance from one chair to another.

"I don't know what you mean," he said. "Why do you speak like that? I've never done you any harm. I've never set eyes on you before."

"Oh, haven't you?" the man said. "But you've thought about me and"—his voice rose—"and you've written about me. You got some fun out of me, didn't you? Now I'm going to get some fun out of you. You made me just as nasty as you could. Wasn't that doing me harm? You didn't think what it would feel like to be me, did you? You didn't put yourself in my place, did you? You hadn't any pity for me, had you? Well, I'm not going to have any pity for you."

"But I tell you," cried Walter, clutching the table's edge, "I don't know you!"

"And now you say you don't know me! You did all that to me and then forgot me!" His voice became a whine, charged with self-pity. "You forgot William Stainsforth."

"William Stainsforth!"

"Yes. I was your scapegoat, wasn't I? You unloaded all your self-dislike on me. You felt pretty good while you were writing about me. You thought, what a noble, upright fellow you were, writing about this rotter. Now, as one W. S. to another, what shall I do, if I behave in character?"

"I . . . I don't know," muttered Walter.

"You don't know?" Stainsforth sneered. "You ought to know, you fathered me. What would William Stainsforth do if he met his old dad in a quiet place, his kind old dad who made him swing?"

Walter could only stare at him.

"You know what he'd do as well as I," said Stainsforth. Then his face changed and he said abruptly, "No, you don't, because you never really understood me. I'm not so black as you painted me." He paused, and a flicker of hope started in Walter's breast. "You never gave me a chance, did you? Well, I'm going to give you one. That shows you never un-

derstood me, doesn't it?"

Walter nodded.

"And there's another thing you have forgotten."

"What is that?"

"I was a kid once," the ex-policeman said.

Walter said nothing.

"You admit that?" said William Stainsforth grimly. "Well, if you can tell me of one virtue you ever credited me with—just one kind thought—just one redeeming feature—"

"Yes?" said Walter, trembling.

"Well, then I'll let you off."

"And if I can't?" whispered Walter.

"Well, then, that's just too bad. We'll have to come to grips and you know what that means. You took off one of my arms but I've still got the other. 'Stainsforth of the iron hand' you called me."

Walter began to pant.

"I'll give you two minutes to remember," Stainsforth said. They both looked at the clock. At first the stealthy movement of the hand paralyzed Walter's thought. He stared at William Stainsforth's face, his cruel, crafty face, which seemed to be always in shadow, as if it was something the light could not touch. Desperately he searched his memory for the one fact that would save him; but his memory, clenched like a fist, would give up nothing. "I must invent something," he thought, and suddenly his mind relaxed and he saw, printed on it like a photograph, the last page of the book. Then, with the speed and magic of a dream, each page appeared before him in perfect clarity until the first was reached, and he realized with overwhelming force that what he looked for was not there. In all that evil there was not one hint of good. And he felt, compulsively and with a kind of exaltation, that unless he testified to this the cause of goodness everywhere would be betrayed.

"There's nothing to be said for you!" he shouted. "And you know it! Of all your dirty tricks this is the dirtiest! You want me to whitewash you, do you? The very snowflakes on you are turning black! How dare you ask me for a character? I've given you one already! God forbid that I should ever say a good word for you! I'd rather die!"

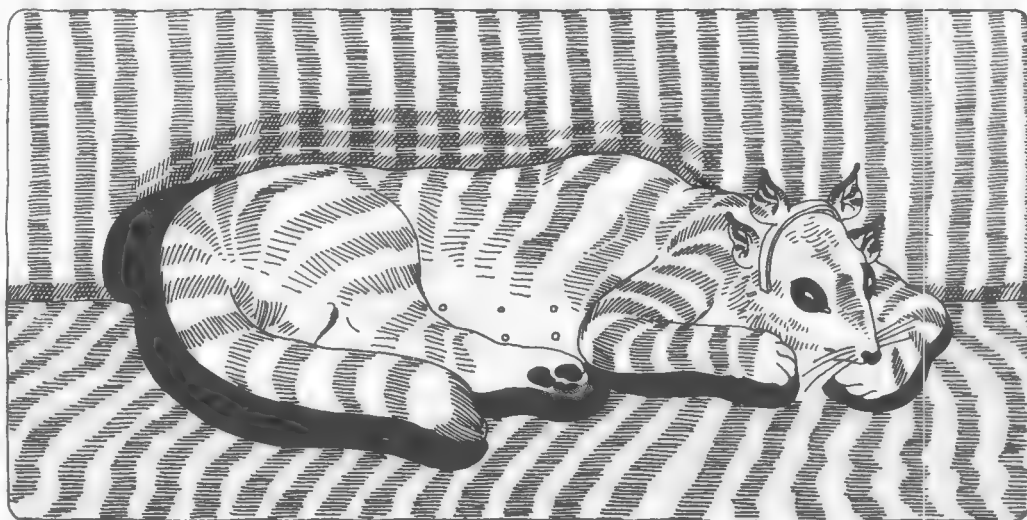
Stainsforth's one arm shot out. "Then die!" he said.

The police found Walter Streeter slumped across the dining table. His body was still warm, but he was dead. It was easy to tell how he died; for it was not his hand that his visitor had shaken, but his throat. Walter Streeter had been strangled. Of his assailant there was no trace. On the table and on his clothes were flakes of melting snow. But how it came there remained a mystery, for no snow was reported from any district on the day he died. 17

THREE TIMELY TALES

by Rick Norwood

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF FERDINAND FEGHOOT, WE
PRESENT A TRIO OF SCENES FROM TIMES PAST
THAT YOU WON'T FIND IN ANY HISTORY BOOK.



After the unsuccessful colonial revolt, the British colonies in the New World were organized into the United States of Canada. In time this vast and peaceful nation grew to include the entire North American continent. One of its most famous heroes was the Cisco Kid of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

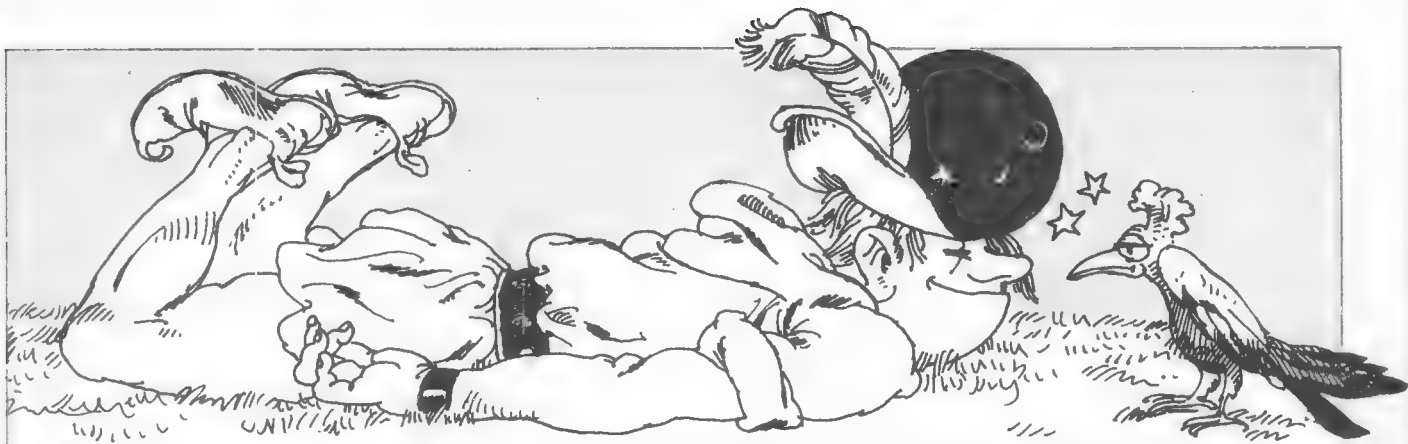
Strange reports were coming in from prospectors in the Yukon. A new animal had been seen, a swift, elusive beast that the miners called a mouse-cat.

What made the reports so remarkable was the news that the mouse-cat, unique among mammals,

had three ears. The Cisco Kid was sent to investigate.

The Cisco Kid returned from the Yukon empty-handed. The mouse-cat had proved too shy and clever to be captured. He had, however, observed the little animals closely, and he could vouch for the fact that they had not three ears, but four!

The controversy was referred to the Science Court, and in short order they handed down a verdict in favor of bilateral symmetry. "For," said the Chief Justice, "who are we to believe, the three mouse-cat ears or the count of Mountie Cisco?" 17



The Grand Duke of Austria sat on his throne. A tall, clear-eyed man was brought before him in chains.

"This churl refuses to bow down to your hat, which we placed on display in the public square, as you commanded."

"I am a free Swiss," the man said. "I bow to no man, and to no man's hat."

"Take him out and hang him," said the Duke.

But as they were dragging the man away, the Duke cried out, "Wait! I know this fellow, and I will give him a sporting chance. Bring him and his son to the playing green behind the palace."

A few minutes later they were all gathered on

the green, and the Duke explained the rules of the contest.

"You will be given a bowling ball and will stand at this end of the green. Your son will stand at the other end. If you can knock your son over with the bowling ball, you both will go free. If you miss, you and your son both die."

A guard led the boy to the opposite end of the field.

"What's going on here!" the young man cried.

The guard, who had no doubt that the father's keen eye would save the day, bent to reassure the lad. "Ask not for whom the Tell bowls, he bowls for thee." ¹⁷



Abraham Lincoln murdered—by a woman! In a matter of hours the news had flashed to London, via the new Arctic Heliograph, and the next day Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson boarded the morning mail dirigible for America.

The Secret Service Head gave the great detective the facts of the case. A handsome, well-dressed woman had been seen standing behind the President in his private box. She took a pistol from her purse and fired one shot. Within minutes the Secret Service had sealed all exits from Ford's Theatre. But, in spite of a thorough search, the woman was not to be found.

"There is nothing here for you, Holmes. We

know who the woman is. Her name is Trudy. Several members of the acting company recognized her as a woman who had introduced herself to them earlier as a girl friend of the famous actor John Wilkes Booth. Booth, of course, denies any knowledge of her."

"Come, Watson. We may as well return to London."

"Surely, Holmes, you are not giving up!"

"Giving up! No! I've solved the case."

"How can that be?"

"It is so simple I am amazed you did not see it, Watson. Booth is Trudy—and Trudy, Booth. That's all I know, and all I need to know." ¹⁷

What Really Happened to Uncle Chuckles?

by Ron Wolfe

IT'S THE QUESTION ALL AMERICA IS ASKING.
NOW, AS A PUBLIC SERVICE,
WE'RE GIVING YOU THE LOWDOWN.

Nobody can say better than I what really happened to Uncle Chuckles, because I was in a position to watch the whole thing.

But nobody looks my way anymore.

Dan Rather comes on the network news with his eyebrows crunched together like he's thinking the universe has just one big secret left. "What was it happened to Uncle Chuckles?" he wants to know, and the only answer he gets is a mouthwash commercial.

I could tell him.

I could tell everybody—starting with what Uncle Chuckles was really like: him with that big, shiny red fake nose like a radish sprouted up between the painted roses on his cheeks, and the beat-up old porkpie hat he used to wear. You couldn't help but love him ...

For about five minutes.

But sitting through the whole thirty-minute show of that "ho-ho" and "ha-ha" he kept up was like trying to choke down a bushel basket full of marshmallows.

Uncle Chuckles would never have been the big guy he was in Cincinnati, and he sure wouldn't have been dickering with CBS to pick up the show and go national with it, except for Johnny Arthur.

If you're asking now, "Who is Johnny Arthur?"—no wonder. Johnny's name flashed past so quickly in the credits at the end of the show that it was just blip! and gone. You could catch maybe the *J* one day and the *o* the next and piece it together over the course of three months, and you still wouldn't know Johnny Arthur from a six-foot-deep hole in the ground.

I told him: "Johnny," I said. "Stand up to him. Don't let him pretend that he does it himself. Get what's yours."

But the one thing in life Johnny Arthur couldn't do was fight for himself. He just took what

came along, and what came along for Johnny was Uncle Chuckles.

So, to answer who was Johnny—he worked the puppets, *all* the puppets. Starting with the way the show opened ...

"Chuck-chuck-chuck Chuckles. Chuck-chuck-chuck Chuckles." That goofy-looking chicken face on the screen was Rhode Island Eggbert; and the way the eyes rolled and the feathers bristled up around his neck when he clucked and crowed, you'd have sworn he came out of an egg, not a box of felt scraps.

Then on waddled Uncle Chuckles, his big clown shoes slapping against the floor like a couple of fish flopping around out of water.

"Ho-ho, ha-ha," he'd let out. And every kid watching would have wet his pants scrambling to hit the dial right then except for knowing what came next.

"Ho-ho, Old Clock on the Wall," Uncle Chuckles would say. "What time is it?"

The clock—Johnny gave it a real face and not a clock face; it had squinty eyes, and a moustache the color of a nosebleed, and a tic in the left corner of the mouth—the clock would say, "Time for Missy Meow, Uncle Chuckles."

Now, the clock was on the east side of the wall. The puppet stage was to the west about twelve feet away, and Johnny would have to scoot all that way just zip! behind the curtain, and up would pop Missy Meow, the Calico Cat.

She would yowl out a little song, and then zip! back to the clock and Uncle Chuckles saying, "Ho-ho and what time is it now, Old Clock on the Wall?"

"Time for Mr. Pack Mouse, Uncle Chuckles"—which was a hand and rod puppet, like Missy Meow and also Andy Anteater.

So now there's Uncle Chuckles slouching



against the puppet stage like the whole thing worked because he winked his eye just right and didn't have anything to do with Johnny going crazy back there.

Johnny snagged his arm on a nail point behind the set one time and took eight stitches afterwards while Chuckles ranted around threatening to fire him for making noise.

Chuckles would say, "Ho-ho, Mr. Pack Mouse,

and what are you packing today?" and the mouse would tell him, "Birthday names, Uncle Chuckles."

I mean—*dumb*, right? But the puppets made it work. And Johnny made the puppets, and Uncle Chuckles made up a contract that said they didn't belong to Johnny anymore; they belonged to *The Uncle Chuckles Show*.

- And Johnny took it.



He told me once: "Look," he said. "Suppose you were thirty-three like I was, and nothing you ever did came out right, and the best job you ever had was selling shoes."

Johnny was a shoe clerk and just scraping along until he got the idea of putting on a puppet show in the store window to bring in the kids. The store manager said, "Sure," and rang up a five-dollar bill and told him, "That oughta buy a Bugs Bunny or whatever."

But Johnny went scrounging through the used-book stores until he came up with *Happy-time Puppets You Can Make*. For five dollars he got the book and some felt and fake fur and buttons, and a headache the next day from working all night.

He made Andy the Anteater with a red string tongue that flicked out like a lasso, and Oliver Octopus with eight legs that all moved.

Johnny was in the store window fitting tennis shoes on Oliver, when along came Uncle Chuckles.

The strange thing about Uncle Chuckles—he must have had some other name like Tom, or George, or something, but I never heard it. Nobody called him anything but Uncle Chuckles.

The first time I heard his name at all was his wife yelling it at him, "Chuckles, you bastard!"

They mixed it up right there on the set of *The Uncle Chuckles Show*, and he popped her one, and she hit him back and stomped off, which all had to do with him sneaking around with Margie Higgins in the newsroom.

He'd been Uncle Chuckles here and Uncle Chuckles there around Iowa and Kansas, and got a big break coming to Cincinnati when the guy doing Old Farmer Asparagus died in '78. They needed somebody in a hurry.

So the station took on Uncle Chuckles, and watched the ratings wilt and shrivel for a couple of weeks. Chuckles was on his way out. He knew it.

It was a little fact of the business that he

didn't tell Johnny that day.

"Sure, he talked me into quitting the store and coming to work for him," Johnny would say when I tried to clue him to Chuckles. "But it turned out okay, didn't it?"

"Okay" was as close as Johnny ever came to puffing up his own ego, even though *The Uncle Chuckles Show* picked up right away with him and his puppets. It beat *Gilligan's Island* in the second week.

Pretty quick, Mr. Pack Mouse was getting twenty and thirty birthday cards a month, and Uncle Chuckles quit slipping in made-up names.

The moral of all this was not lost on Uncle Chuckles. It was, "More puppets, John. More puppets, more puppets."

That was when Johnny dreamed up Mike the Marvelous, the magician. Mike was a hand puppet with wide spooky eyes and a black beard that came to a forked end. The same way he got the puppet book, Johnny hunted around the back shelves of those dusty and dreary-looking old bookstores you wonder who goes in, and he bought every book on magic he could find.

He had one book so worn and dog-eared and dirty, you had to squint at the cover to see that anything was written on it, and then all you could make out was, *Secrets of the* (something-blank-blank) *Damned*.

So, Mike the Marvelous didn't just nod his head and wave his arms like a puppet. He twirled the tips of his beard, and did real tricks. He did the Chinese linking rings, and a cups-and-balls bit, and a card trick that Johnny got out of that *Secrets ...* book.

Nobody ever figured out how he did it.

The way it went: Mike fans the deck. You pick a card. Mike holds the card up—say, ace of spades—and rattles off a bunch of magician talk I couldn't begin to pronounce that Johnny got out of the book.

He puts the card back in the deck.

You shuffle.

He says, "Ace of spades, come out, come out."

The deck is by itself in front of you and Mike the Marvelous, and it starts to quiver and twitch. There is something about it—inside it—going jump! jump! jump! like a spider caught between the cards, and then ...

Out it comes, out from the deck, inching in bends and shudders toward Mike, and he picks it up:

The ace of spades.

Johnny pulled that one on Uncle Chuckles, who had white greasepaint all over his face, and he *still* turned whiter.

The trick scared him, sure; but more than that, it was the idea of being upstaged on his own show by a goggle-eyed little puppet.

"Stinks, John," he said. "Get rid of it. Gimme ... gimme a puppy dog or another damn cat. Gimme more."

Johnny told me all about it.

I met him about a year after he started working for Uncle Chuckles.

I was hanging around, and he'd talk to me now and then when he was thinking about what puppets he could add to the show, because Chuckles was always wanting more and more.

I said: "Johnny," I told him, "don't argue with me. Get out there with Mike the Marvelous, and see how fast the network big guys find a way to keep you and get rid of Chuckles."

"But I can't cheat him ..." he said.

"Don't worry. They'll pay him off. They'll do all right by him. Just do what I say."

The network was sending its guys out the next day to park right there on the Uncle Chuckles set and see how things went.

I said, "Get back here tonight, and bring Mike. Set up the magic act—but keep it out of sight. Keep it a surprise."

The show went out live, so once Johnny got started, there was no way that Chuckles could stop him. And Chuckles himself had disowned the magician.

That's why it was my fault that Johnny came back after Chuckles had left for the night.

He was doing what I told him—loading silks and little foam rubber rabbits into the back of the magic cabinet—when the door opened, and it was Chuckles.

"Workin' late, huh. Good boy, John," Chuckles said. He started poking around the set. "Lost my billfold somepla—"

Chuckles saw then what Johnny was doing, and you could almost hear the blood come bubbling into Chuckles' face.

"I ..." Johnny just stammered.

Chuckles grabbed Mike the Marvelous out of Johnny's hands. He slammed the puppet against the edge of the puppet stage, and the head ripped off.

"You little shit!" Chuckles said, and pitched a clumsy roundhouse.

Johnny ducked and stepped back.

"I build up a show—*my* show—and you think you're gonna sneak in and swipe it away?" Chuckles was raging.

"No!" Johnny took another step back, and his foot snagged on an electrical cord on the floor. "I just thought—"

Chuckles swung at him again, missing again, but Johnny tripped. He staggered backwards, and I saw him fall. I wanted to scream for him.

The back of Johnny's head hit against the corner of Uncle Chuckles' big Chucklestone Toy Chest with a sound like a chunk of soft ice dropped on the

floor. That sound is still with me, a thick, curdled thing in my mind.

"Johnny?" Chuckles lifted him up. "Oh, hell, John." He raised Johnny's head back and slammed it into the toy chest twice more.

He was kneeling there with Johnny's head in his lap, shaking and sniffing. But it didn't take him long to get his act together.

"... terrible, terrible accident." I heard Chuckles talking on the phone in the engineering room. "Must have slipped. I don't know. I came in, and there he was."

Johnny was sprawled on his back the way Chuckles had left him, one eye open and one eye jammed shut like a broken puppet.

I wished—oh, I wished—for Mike the Marvelous to say the words that would make Johnny sit up and be himself again, but there was no more Mike. There was nothing but Johnny on the floor with his head tilted back like the last thing he wanted was to see me, to tell me something.

I hope what he wanted to say was, "I don't blame you. Don't blame yourself." But I do; I always will.

The ambulance took him away.

The police came and went.

Chuckles howled and carried on like his mother had died, and it was all I could do to keep from yelling the truth—but who would have believed me?

The police sergeant finished his report, telling Chuckles, "Look, it was one of those things. That's all. Go home and get some sleep."

Chuckles blew his nose.

"No, no ..." he said. "I gotta line up ... somebody to work the puppets tomorrow. Johnny ..." He broke off, blubbing. "Johnny would want me to. All those precious, precious little kids watching, expecting. You know."

Chuckles was on the phone again two minutes after the sergeant had gone: "Hank? Chuckles. Yeah, I know what time it is, but I got a job for you ... Yeah, well, screw *The Cap'n Coattails Show*, Hank, ol' buddy. This is the big time."

The show goes on: And all that.

The network guys were there the next morning wearing three-piece suits and doling out handshakes. They seemed to be running a contest to see how many cigars they could get Chuckles to light for them.

You bet. The show went on.

Fade in, camera one:

"Chuck-chuck-chuck-Chuckles. Chuck-chuck-chuck-Chuckles." And it's Rhode Island Eggbert, and pan back to:

Uncle Chuckles.

"Ho-ho. Ha-ha. What time is it now, Old Clock on the Wall?"

Uncle Chuckles

*"She fell down and hit her head,
and her little pussycat brains
spilled out in a great big puddle."*

"Time for the Uncle Chuckles Show!"

"Ho-ho. That's right, boys and girls. It's me. Uncle Chuckles. *Ho-ho!* And now, Rhode Island Eggbert is gonna whisper Uncle Chuckles a secret."

Chuckles leaned over and tipped his head toward the chicken. "Ho-ho!"

The chicken lurched forward and jabbed him in the cheek with the point of that yellow plastic chicken bill that Johnny made, and Chuckles squealed and staggered back.

"Oops, sorry, Uncle Chuckles. Guess I'm just a dumb cluck," the chicken squawked.

Chuckles tapped the spot on his cheek with a finger of his white-gloved hand. The fingertip was stained red.

"Hank, you idiot!" Chuckles caught himself then, grinning that great clown grin of his. "I think that'll be enough of Rhode Island Eggbert, ho-ho," he said. "Let's ask the Old Clock on the Wall—what time is it now?"

"Time for Missy Meow," the clock replied with a tic in the corner of its mouth.

Chuckles nodded eagerly. He pointed toward the puppet stage, toward ... nothing.

"Uh ..." he said.

One of the network guys coughed loudly.

"Ho-ho. Where is ...?"

Out came Andy Anteater. His tongue flicked in and out with a sizzling noise. "She's not here, Uncle Chuckles," Andy Anteater said. "She's dead."

"D-dead?"

"She fell down and hit her head, and her little pussycat brains spilled out in a great big puddle."

Chuckles grabbed the anteater, yanking it away from the stage. It dangled in his hand. "Hank! Hank!" he pleaded. "What the hell's going on?"

In answer there was the screeching noise of a chair being pushed back, and another chair—the network guys.

"Hey!" Chuckles turned toward them. "Hey, you can't leave."

"That's right," chimed in the Old Clock on the Wall. "Not yet. It's time for Mr. Pack Mouse."

The network guys paused, and one of the five of them sat down again.

"... time for Mr. Pack Mouse," the clock said.

"Ready, Uncle Chuckles?"

Chuckles grinned. Yeah. He was ready.

The mouse head bobbed up.

"Hi, Uncle Chuckles."

Chuckles reached to shake hands with the puppet like he always did. "Ho-ho, and hi there, Mr. Pack Mouse."

"Glad to see me?"

"I sure am."

"Wonder what I've got today?" the mouse asked.

"Ho-ho, Mr. Pack Mouse. Let me guess." Chuckles turned to face the camera. He put his finger thoughtfully to the bright bulb of his nose. "You've got a big load of birthday cards."

The mouse nodded no. His beady eyes glittered in the hot lights of the set.

"No, Uncle Chuckles," the mouse said. "No, no. I've got something else today. I've got ..."

Chuckles *saw*. He just stood there. He didn't believe.

"... I've got, just for you, Uncle Chuckles—a nice big butcher knife."

And this is where people argue over what they saw.

Some people say the little mouse puppet just ... somehow ... fell off the stage, and dropped on Uncle Chuckles. Then, some people say it didn't fall off at all, but *lunged* off—the knife raised above its little head. And wrapped itself around Uncle Chuckles' glistening, sweaty neck until he toppled over screaming and squalling. And plunged the knife, jerking the blade out in a sparkling spray, stabbing again and again until the blade snapped and the knife handle dropped, clattering onto that same floor where Johnny had died.

The puppet, lifted from Uncle Chuckles, was not a mouse at all, really. It was just some felt and fake fur, and two little buttons for the eyes.

So, sure, people ask. Everybody asks. Dan Rather asks, "What was it happened to Uncle Chuckles?"

They can't ask Hank. Remember?—the puppet man. Hank showed up to practice the night before, and I had a few words with him. He didn't bother even to close the door on his way out. Nobody knows what became of him.

But I think now ... they could ask you.

I think you know.

Andy thinks so, too, and he says I talk too much. You should see him when he gets really, icy mad, the way his tongue whips around. He keeps saying how we're going to have to do something about you. But that's just Andy; I wouldn't worry too much.

Meantime, if you have any questions, you know where to find me. I'm in a position. Just look my way.

You know me.

The Old Clock on the Wall. 17

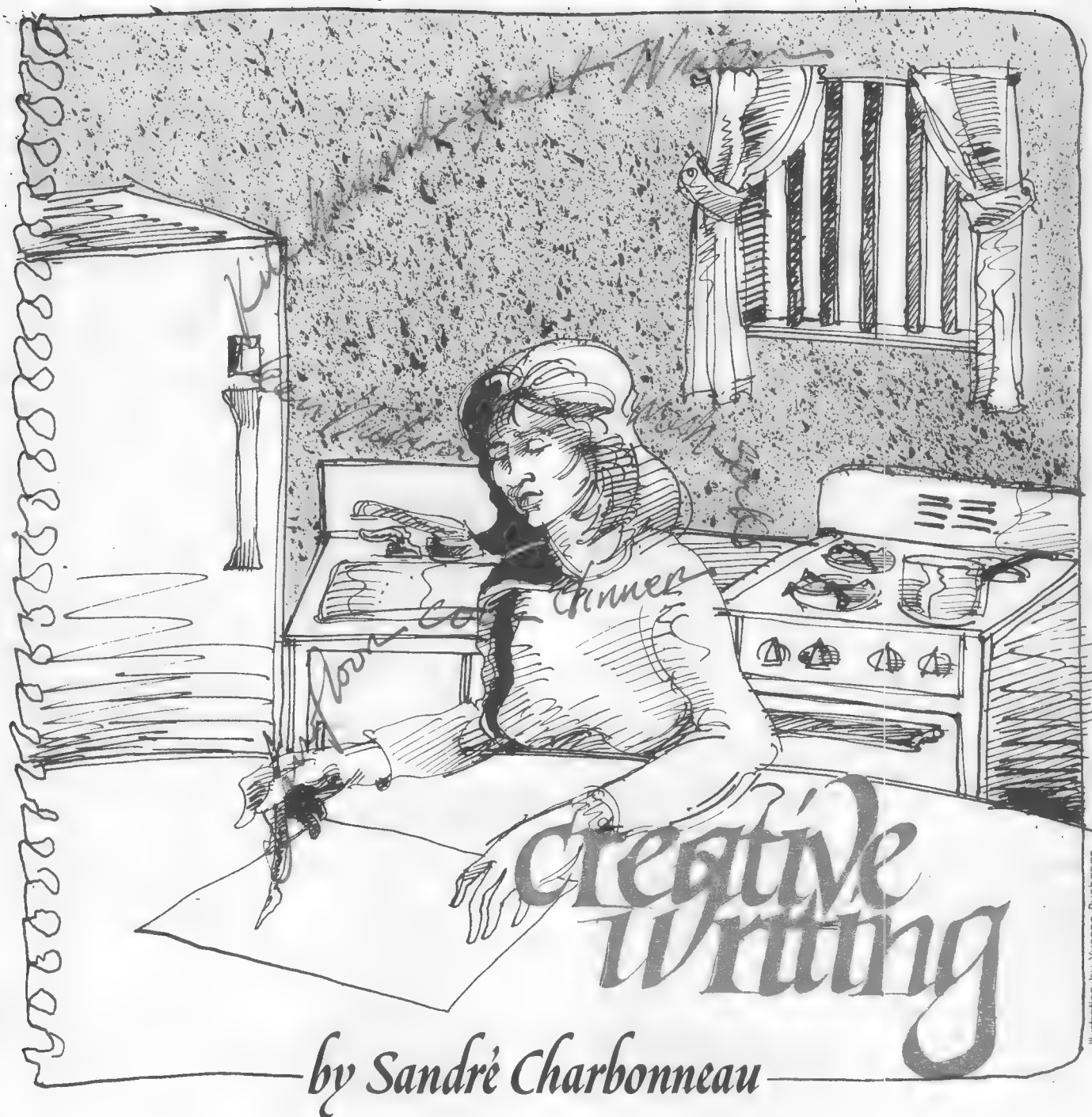


Illustration by Yvonne Buchanan

FREEDOM, FORTUNE, EVEN FAME—
THEY WOULD BE HERS
WITH THE SIMPLE FLOURISH OF A PEN.

Helle's eyes were drawn to the tiny black and white square by a single word: CALLIGRAPHY. The ad was small and undistinguished. In block letters it read:

MAGIC MONK CALLIGRAPHY KITS
\$6.95 + Pstg. & Hndlg.

The mailing address was a box number in Illinois.

"There are no socks that match," Bert whined loudly from their bedroom.

"I laid out a pair of brown ones for you," Helle said over her shoulder, wondering aimlessly if it would be practical to learn calligraphy without knowing any Latin.

Her own penmanship was quite lovely, and more than once complete strangers had complimented her on it. It was her romance with the written word that had eventually led her to become a writer.

Well, fledgling writer.

Calligraphy was one of those "things to learn" she never seemed to have time for. Maybe if she perfected her technique she could even make a little money doing invitations or certificates or something ...

"D'ya suppose, Hel," Bert said in his inimitably nasal way, "that you could wash socks and underwear *before* I actually need them?"

"Course," she said. Somehow his line of logic on the subject of socks and underwear escaped her entirely, but with Bert it was always best to smile and mumble, "Course," whether one meant it or not.

Helle marked her place in the magazine with her fork, finished the last sip of her coffee, and shuffled into the kitchen to turn the bacon, which had grown suspiciously quiet.

"Am I expecting too much of you, Hel?" Bert asked, standing the doorway of the kitchen in his white jockey shorts and brown socks. She would have laughed if she had been awake. His fine, if large, French nose and wide sky-blue eyes made him look for all the world like a tall pelican wearing brown socks.

"I mean, I realize, with your writing and all, that housework is, well, low on your list of priorities," he went on. She flinched inwardly because she knew what was coming. She'd spent a good deal of money going to two writers' conferences this year, more money taking a mini-course in novel writing at the community college, and even some of the household funds for her supplies.

She had almost written a check the day before for a used IBM Selectric typewriter to replace her trusty but worn Hermes manual.

Her earnings to date, on the other hand, consisted of two short verses that had sold to "literary" magazines, one for ten dollars, the other for a free issue. She hadn't "broken even," and it was already May.

Bert knew this litany of expenditures by heart,

and frequently recited it over breakfast. He paused between bites to add, "I'm just trying to be fair, Hel. To both of us. After all, I go out there and spend ten hours a day working to support you, and all I expect in return is three meals a day, clean shirts, and a nice home. Now I ask you, is that too demanding?"

"Anh? Eh, no," she said. She had mentally stumbled over the perfect solution: four hours a day on housework, four on her writing (before Bert got home), and, after a couple of hours rest, she could practice calligraphy for as many hours as she could squeeze in between midnight and dawn.

"Got to go, Hel," he said. It was precisely 6:44 A.M. "See if you can't get yourself together today, hmm? Oh, and Hel, after the laundry, see if you can manage to dust, will you?" He chuckled. "I could plant begonias on the sill in the living room!" He laughed uproariously and patted her head.

She watched him back down the driveway. "You should've married Betty Crocker," she mumbled, and turned to face the tasks at hand.

The following week was a blur of Pine Sol, rubber gloves, and spin cycles. She scrubbed and cleaned and cooked. Clothes she didn't recognize were washed and ironed. Home-baked bread and cookies filled the kitchen counters. The phone went unanswered during marathon bouts of vacuuming. She clipped coupons and shopped scrupulously to get the most for her food dollar.

And her faithful Hermes got dusty.

Every time she picked up her notes and outlines for the stories she wanted to write, what sprang to mind was not prose but clothes. Or dishes that needed washing. Or windows that hadn't been cleaned. Or yard work that hadn't been finished.

It wasn't until Thursday afternoon, when she was scrubbing the grout from between the bathroom floor tiles with Comet and a toothbrush, that Helle realized something had definitely gone wrong.

"What am I doing?"

She stood up and glared at her bedraggled reflection in the sparkling bathroom mirror. "I really hate this, y'know," she said to the poor creature with the straggling brown hair. The woman in the mirror nodded sourly.

"This was supposed to be a compromise. Some compromise!" She snorted. "He gets his dream house and I get dish-pan body. Well, this is the maid's day off!"

She *thwopped* down her rubber gloves, and was heading for the study to write a murder mystery about a woman who poisons her husband with bleach, when the doorbell rang.

"What now?"

She flung open the front door with a few choice words about mail service and twenty-cent stamps on the tip of her tongue only to find the front steps deserted. Propped against the doorframe

was a middling-size manilla envelope marked HANDLE WITH CARE.

Something about the package made her hurry to close the door and walk into the study before she tore open the gummed flap.

Excitedly Helle emptied the contents onto the top of her desk. A little cry of glee escaped her as she caught sight of the Magic Monk Easy Calligraphy Method booklet and five lined practice sheets. Out rolled the black calligraphy pen. Its thick chisel point reminded her of a squashed felt-tipped pen.

"This kit is designed to teach you the fine art of calligraphy at home in approximately ten hours of applied study," she read. "Once the principles of this craft have been mastered, we hope the pupil will adhere to the credo of Brother Boniface, for whom our system is named, who lived by the axiom, *'I write the truth.'*" Brother Boniface? Oh, sure . . .

The tinny anniversary clock in the living room struck six. Time to start dinner.

She swept the calligraphy equipment into the top desk drawer, and, on impulse, locked it.

Helle didn't hear any of Bert's mealtime conversation, hardly noticed the noisy rattle of the television programs they watched, and couldn't be certain whether or not she had kissed Bert good-night. All she could think of was the calligraphy kit in the study. After an hour of staring at the ceiling, she heard Bert snoring softly and crept cautiously out from under the bedclothes.

Ideally the student was supposed to take the full ten hours, spread over as many days, study the lower-case letters for several hours, letters with tails (called descenders) for another few sessions, perfecting the angle of the pen by practicing capitals, numbers, serifs, and ascenders. She couldn't keep herself from eagerly dashing through the lessons in the book, although she had to pause for an occasional yawn.

At six she took a break just long enough to fix Bert's breakfast, and the moment his car reached the bottom of the drive, she was back in the study with her practice sheets.

"There's laundry to do," an inner voice nagged her.

"Just one more lesson," she answered it blearily. "Then I'll do the housework. How long could one more lesson take?"

LESSON 12: JOINING

In order to learn how to join the characters correctly and naturally, we suggest the pupil practice by writing simple sentences.

She held the thick instrument in her aching hand and concentrated on her first sentence: My name is Helle McIlheny.

A tingle ran through her. For the blink of an

eye, she felt as though the pen was sending a warm, pleasant current through her.

Naw.

"What else can I write?" A gleam came to her eye and she chuckled wickedly. "I know," she said.

Yes, her calligraphy was certainly improving, and she liked her maxim better than the ones in the book. The lovely words spelled out:

I don't have any more laundry to do.

She flexed her hand, resigned herself to the idea of the day's housework, and giggled. "'I don't have any more laundry to do.' Genius."

Wearily she opened the hall closet, where the dirty clothes were kept. Except there were no clothes in the bottom of the closet. Dismayed, she tried to think whether or not she had already moved them into the utility room.

But the utility room was empty. The sparkling white Maytag smiled ominously at her from its corner as if it had swallowed the clothes.

"Could've sworn I sorted those clothes yesterday," she said to herself as she flicked on the light for the walk-in closet in their bedroom. A strangled gasp escaped her. The coat and suit hangers dangled emptily, clicking and chiming in the bare closet.

Helle ran to the long oak dresser and frantically pulled out the drawers. Nothing. Empty. Absolutely no clothes in the house.

No, it couldn't be.

Pens didn't have any magical powers.

"I write the truth."

Of course, there's only one way to find out, she thought, edging toward the study. She put a clean sheet of paper before her and carefully spelled out:

*All of our clothes are clean
and put in their proper places.*

Somehow she knew exactly what she would find when she walked into the bedroom.

"I don't believe this . . ."

Lingerie, sweaters, and Bert's coveted underwear were all neatly folded and displayed in complete order in the disarray of the scattered drawers.

Helle hit the door of the study running. "This is a godsend! . . . No offense, Brother Boniface."

She commanded her sorcerer's apprentice all afternoon—clean dishes, vacuumed rugs, crisply made beds, sparkling tile, and a defrosted refrigerator. The marketing finished itself. On a whim she wrote herself a new outfit and a permanent, but decided not to push her luck and made the meatloaf herself.

After a glorious bubble bath and a refreshing little catnap, she had plenty of time to work on one of the stories she had shelved a week before. She was humming contentedly over the second draft



when she heard Bert's key in the front door.

"H'lo, Hel, I'm home!" he called from the foyer.

Helle looked up and frowned. Seems to think this is a rerun of *Father Knows Best*, she thought, and he's Robert bloody Young.

During the meal she was vaguely preoccupied with a thought that wouldn't quite come into focus. The *clittering* of Bert's fork against his plate brought her back to the present with a jolt.

"Finished your shirts today," she ventured.

"Mmm," Bert the Pelican grunted. He was frowning at something on his plate.

"And I managed to defrost the fridge."

"Um-huh."

"The guest bath is clean, too," she said flatly, involuntarily grinding her teeth. "So I spent a few hours on my new hobby."

Bert was still glaring at the foreign matter on his plate and chewing thoughtfully.

"All right, Bert. What is it now?"

"New hobby, y'say?" he asked, blinking innocently at her as if she had just awakened him. He laid down his fork and fastened on his Grand Inquisitor's smile. "Hope your new hobby is shopping for a different kind of hamburger."

"Oh?" Her eyes narrowed perceptibly.

"This is not one of your better meatloaves, Hel."

"Pardon me for a moment, will you?" she asked, and swept, a la Loretta Young, into the study, where she took out the strange pen.

She hesitated only a moment before writing:

I am a comfortably situated and respected young widow.

"It can't be that easy, can it? . . . Bert?" she called softly, and heard the words echo through the silent and empty dining room.

Peculiar that sunlight was pouring through the dining room sheers.

Sunlight?

She threw open the front door and was greeted by afternoon sun and a stack of mail, on top of which was an official-looking envelope addressed to Mrs. Bertrand McIlheny.

Inside was a check made out to her for a staggering sum of money. In the lower left corner of the check were the words DEATH BENEFIT.

"Shame I missed the funeral." She smiled as she opened the stack of touching condolence cards.

Later that evening, after she had finished the sumptuous rack of lamb prepared for her by Mrs. Fenn, the housekeeper she had written up, she began to ponder the possible boon to her writing career that her newfound talent presented.

It would be so easy. All she had to do was write, "I have sold my first short story," or "tenth," or "twentieth" for that matter, and it would be so.

"Maybe just once more," she told herself. "Just one . . . um . . . push in the right direction. Then I'll destroy the pen, and I'll never be tempted again."

Her dilemma, then, was how far to go with her peculiar "gift." One story? An article? Maybe her first novel. Hell, why not go all the way?

She picked up the pen, and that familiar, sensuous glow swept over her. Carefully she wrote out her final wish. The words seemed to jump off the page at her. By morning, she knew, she would have everything she desired.

"Adios, ol' chum," she said, and snapped the odd little instrument in half. She dropped its plastic corpse into the wastebasket and it bled ink all over the bottom.

The instant before she settled into sleep in her now large double bed, she glanced once more at what she'd written.

"I am a nationally renowned best-selling author," she read aloud, and fell asleep with a smile.

A stabbing slant of white-hot sunlight woke her. Must've overslept, she thought, and pulled the curtain back to reveal a day that flashed with bright green clarity. Every fiber of her body rippled with a good long stretch. Today she owned the world.

Wiping the sleep out of her eyes, she padded into the bathroom and flipped on the light. When she looked into the bathroom mirror, all of her blood drained to the soles of her feet. She stood there, paralyzed, gulping air like a dying goldfish.

"Oh, my God," she gasped. "What've I done? . . . What've I done? . . . What've I done? . . ."

There, staring back at her from the mirror, was the pudgy, unshaven face of Truman Capote. 17

PULP MEISTER

BY
DAVID J.
SCHOW



YOU'VE MET HARTLEY'S 'W.S.' NOW MEET BROCK DE SADE,
INTERNATIONAL TROUBLESHOOTER. SEX IS HIS MIDDLE NAME,
DEATH HIS TRADEMARK. AND MAYBE HE EVEN EXISTS!

If my own atrophied story sense had had any say in the matter, I suppose I would have been dispatched on the spot. Savate kick. A specially dum-dum'ed .38 caliber slug from a hammerless Smith and Wesson Centennial Airweight would have followed, scattering my brains in two dozen directions, like mattress ticking.

But that sort of out only happens in the books.

Alpha Beta's liquor department was the last place in the cosmos I would have picked for a rendezvous with a Spy Crusher, too. Shows you what in hell I know. The son of a bitch didn't add a slug to

my forehead, either—he just stood two aisles over, arms folded, waiting for me to react, with the same kind of smug expression you see on chimpanzees at the zoo . . . right before they heave one of their turds at you, through the bars.

Splat. The Kahlúa bottle took advantage of my abrupt slackness of grip, and gravitated. It did not explode theatrically across the floor into brown wedges of glass and a gooey puddle of *licor de café*—again, that sort of image only occurred in fiction. It just spun around madly, waiting for some smooching adolescents to show.

I looked back and the man with the unmistakable dress and mien was gone. The counterman rolled his eyes at an underling as I sheepishly replaced the bottle on the shelf. The other gawkers drawn by my clumsy performance huffed quickly back to their shopping. Embarrassment city.

The man I saw had disappeared, but I was positive it had been Brock deSade. A character I had created.

It's hard to resist the pull of narrative convenience, especially when it rings so dramatically across the printed page. Sue me; I did *not* create Brock deSade.

That fate befell an ex-journalist whom I had never met: Rocky Stovington, late of the *Chicago Tribune*, "Rocko" to his intimates, and yes, it was probably a pseudonym. Rocko was holed up somewhere in the West L.A. smogscape, reaming out prestige soft-porn novels for seven and a half G's a bang—quite amazing, when your standard, sluice-and-pump stiffeners drag in less than a grand per book anywhere else.

How he snagged the assignment is as good an introduction as any to another of the principal characters in this mess, Shayne Byrne. She was possibly the most unimaginative literary agent on Publisher's Row, but she never let her stable starve, as far as my tummy knew. She unearthed the porn line on Rocko's behalf—they're called "prestige soft-porn" because those are the paperbacks you see on the mainstream fiction racks, shouldered up against Stephen King and the foil covers of John D. MacDonald. Thus far, Rocko had humped his merry way through ten of these epics; I had two of the latest ones on my odds and sods shelf: *Ginger, the Wanton* and *Corinne, the Fickle*. They all had titles like that. I never got around to reading anything but the back covers—*Ready for uncaged sensuality? A firm whip-hand is what Corinne wants. Behind her tame foxiness is the soul of a wolf—if you don't turn her on, she'll turn on you! \$2.50.*

I never read them, but Rocko (aka "Adrianna Savage") was content enough to write them, full-time, which meant that Peephole Books—the soft-cover arm of *FancyFree* magazine's male-oriented publishing interests—was ecstatic enough to sign him up for ten more titles in the series. Which meant that Shayne Byrne, the one who engineered this milestone in chauvinist fable-spinning, was no better off percentage-wise than before, because Rocko had just become too good for his old alias, "Ingram Gunn."

Huzzah for ironic timing. This was the year that they "modified" the composition of those four-for-a-buck macaroni and cheese dinners so the cheese sauce tasted like gypsum board and lead shavings. A steady rebound diet of rice flavored by bouillon cubes

was etching tributaries of orange-slag lunacy into my concentration. I finally knuckled under and called Shayne from a pay phone, Tucson to New York. I billed the call to a First National Bank office I knew was closed.

I'm afraid I babbled a bit.

"I'm destitute, Shayne, I'll do anything as long as it pays money. I'll do World War II trash. Adventure stuff. Gothics. I'll do the comic-book novelizations you mentioned last month. Listen to me, Shayne, I'll do *Spider Man*. I'll do the *Hulk*, for godsake—"

"Sorry, Ollie, but they're all taken." Her voice was sweet; she didn't *sound* like she had the soul of a huckster. We were a continent apart, had met by mail, and had never been introduced in the flesh, as her client Rocko undoubtedly would've put it. "Nothing new in the pipe until after Labor Day. You know how the Industry dies in August; everybody goes on vacation."

At first, I hadn't known that. But I clammed up; I was supposedly *in* the Industry, and did not wish to appear out of touch with its pulse beat. "Yeah," I said, mentally advancing to the next dancestep of my telephone tango with Shayne Byrne—the Ten-Second Wait.

It's like a game show where the contestant has to answer before someone more trivial beats him to it. Either the writer or the agent breaks down first, and speaks—the former, by begging, the latter, by proffering whatever loose tidbits of opportunity billow up to the surface after a carefully fleeting consideration of her client's straits.

She must have heard my stomach rumbling nearly three thousand miles to the west.

"Oh, hey, Oliver, I may have something for you at that—you ever see the *Spy Crusher* books? Could you do one of those for say, five thou?"

"You mean stuff like, um, '*hard-boiled sex 'n violence for gun-lobby loons*?' The red neck, White Sox, blue-ribbon beer crowd? God, guns and guts?"

"Huh?"

"Do all the books have numbers instead of titles?"

"Oh, yeah, both. Microscopic titles, huge pastel numbers. Interested?"

Here's a check, you gonna cash it or frame it, ha-ha. "Fascinated," I said. "Do tell."

"I'll xerox Rocko's bible for the series. But I'll warn you, Tensor Books is panicked since Rocko dropped out. They'll want novel outlines from you yesterday, and the first finished one this afternoon. You'll be hired for your speed, not your star billing."

"Right, right," I said, doing some fast mental abacus work. Given Shayne's time lag, plus the usual screwing around publishers call "processing," plus late contracts, it would be four to six weeks before I saw a check. There's some mystic quality about checks-due that makes writers into reckless fools.

I didn't have to squint at him; I had thumbnailed his description so many times that recognition clicked in a second. It was all outlined in the section of Rocko's Spy Crusher bible subheaded 'Brock deSade deFined.'

"Give me the fine print," I said, drawing my trusty Bic pen.

It could have been *mucho* worse. The amiable staff of the Book Bin had suspected I was boosting their science fiction section dry for some time now. One employee or another hovered perpetually at the rim of my vision, watchdogging. Let 'em, I thought. This was research.

I found *Brock deSade: Spy Crusher* in good/bad company: the *Eviscerator*, the *Annihilist*, the *Mutilation Squad* all stood erect in their pockets, with the inevitable salting of *Doc Savage* oldies in their hairy, masculine company. The *Death Merchant* was still going strong at #45. I plucked the first *Spy Crusher* I saw from the wire book dump—#7: *The Kill Cadre*—and gobbled up Tensor's promotional gambits.

Brock deSade, Spy Crusher, locks horns with a fanatical gang of barbarian zealots, the Kill Cadre! By Ingram Gunn. So this was fame. All the sister series had "authors" as cute as their titles—Bruno Groin, Christian White, Turk Thrust, Buff Rigid—and the advertising squibs dealt in as many monosyllables and hard Germanic consonants as possible. Everything was calculated to sound not just tough, but primal.

Sex is his middle name! Death is his trademark! Unbridled ACTION and gut-ripping TENSION as seething maniacs pot to napalm AMERICA! Their arch-foe: Brock deSade, international trouble-shooter, a chameleonic spectre of intrigue, hard and cold as a .44 Magnum, a keenly-honed killing machine with a computer mind! It's a hit-and-miss, cross-country juggernaut as dynamiting radicals try to make the Spy Crusher eat flaming DEATH!

Okay. The *Kill Cadre* was apparently composed of wimps, since the *Spy Crusher* stomped them into submission in time to tackle #8: *Deathtrap of Terror*. Even more obvious was deSade's healthy showing—you should pardon the expression—"on the racks." There were plenty of cockeyed and empty pockets where the other books in the series had sold briskly.

I dug up a fistful of quarters from my mad money stash (whatever coin happened to be living in my kitchen's Dunes Hotel ashtray). Brock deSade's adventures were \$1.95 a whack. At even the piddling two percent royalty set forth by the joke called a "standard contract," the *Spy Crusher*'s turnover promised a rosy little residual. The book was worth my out-of-pocket expense just to see the Book Bin's overlord grimace his way through a mock coronary at the sight of cash in my outstretched hand. He was a decaying mental case who trundled around his mil-dewing empire in an electric wheelchair, and when he buzzed close enough to make out the cover of my purchase, he grunted to himself, silent and all-knowing. God forbid I should exhibit anything approaching *taste* when I actually ponied up hard American money. The thought that *Corinne, the Fickle* was probably the star of his own nightstand kept me from locking his electric joystick in the direction of the nearest cliff.

I exited toting a Book Bin bag of puffed orange plastic. Contents: one *Spy Crusher*. The rest of them were stuffed securely down into my Dingo boots, beneath my pants. They ran pretty skinny as novels—fifty-five thousand words each, tops—so it was easy to snuggle a pair of them down on each side of my leg while the clerks weren't watching. Two legs; eight more books (in my haste I wound up with two copies of #3: *Banzai Knifekill*). I breezed away, having outfoxed them again. So much for real espionage.

Several weeks later, I sat down to commence *Spy Crusher* #13: *Death Mongers*. Oliver Lowenbruck was about to werewolf into his combat-crouched, patriotically paranoid alter ego, Ingram Gunn, for the first historic time.

Alter ego—there was an idea. That spotting the living embodiment of Brock deSade in the supermarket was the first manifestation of latent schizophrenia. That I had become so suffused with the *machismo* nonsense required to make deSade's world at least *sound* semi-plausible that I had swapped my uneventful leisure moments for the fantasy life of a *Spy Crusher*.

The first habit I assimilated was to rehearse everything mentally, to see how mundane, normal actions would translate into *Spy Crusher* prose. Just that thought made the boring courtyard of my apartment seem filled with menace in the dark.

Brock's proximity sense tingled alert as he

scanned the blackness of the perimeter in efficient 120-degree visual sweeps every two seconds. He jacked back the action of his cobalt-colored service .45 and faded against the wall, covering the hostile turf while edging with Ninja stealth closer to the door . . .

I loathed the possibility; it made too much easy sense. Could Brock deSade have crept up and captured my basic sanity from behind, while I was looking the other way wondering whether my writing talent could withstand the stoop-labor of doing *Spy Crushers*? Terrific. I'd spend the balance of my career in a foam closet, my thesaurus swollen up with drool, repeatedly droning synonyms for *violent causation* and *excess of sensitiveness*.

I pulled open my screen door, which hitched and hit me in the face, causing me to drop my keys in the dark. I cursed the lineage of my landlord for cheapskating on the courtyard lights.

Maybe he didn't cut the lights tonight, I thought, instantly regretting leaving the booze in the store. By the time I got my door open my imagination was in speeding gear:

Brock body-rolled, firing at the silhouette in the door frame. Whirling dum-dums smashed through the enemy's chest in a flopped-over V-shape that splattered his organs through the exploding picture window. Skull shrapnel flew south as his head disintegrated and his smashing corpse joined the spent brass on the floor. Through the cordite fumes, Brock said:

"Why don't you come the rest of the way inside, Mr. Lowenbruck, and close the door?"

His voice was a modulated baritone; the timbre of authority punctuated every—

After a good fifteen seconds of petrification, I stumbled over the insane hope that it might be just a burglar, and that it was my turn to pay the poverty tax. I dropped my keys again.

No such fortune. The shadow-figure in the cluttered darkness of my studio spoke again. "Please. I'm not an hallucination or a robber." My spider lamp clicked on to reveal him standing by my desk. "Why don't you and I sit and talk like rational men?"

I didn't have to squint at him; I had thumbnailed his description so many times that recognition clicked in a second. It was all outlined in the section of Rocko's *Spy Crusher* bible subheaded *Brock deSade deFined*.

He was wearing the buff-colored suit that was *pro forma* whenever the cover art did not have him clad in a night-fighting outfit of black spandex. He was undeniably a Saxon White American Male Protestant, with light brown hair longish over dark brown eyes, all of the thirty years, six-foot-two inches, and 170 trim fighting pounds Rocko had laid down in the bible—the forty xeroxed pages of details outlining the parameters of the whole series, for participating writers.

His eyebrows were up. "Satisfied, Mr. Lowenbruck?" One of his elegantly tapered and veiny hands was poised by the lamp. I didn't recall anything in Rocko's bible about elegantly tapered and veiny hands, but there they were. He tilted the lamp in order to squint at a yellowing memorandum I'd received from Shayne Byrne ages ago. He read it.

I'd thumbtacked the memo there above the typewriter because I believe in milking positive feedback for all the ego-reinforcement coaxable. By staring at the memo for over a year I was maximizing editorial karma, like bowing to Mecca, and its text was ingrained into my memory:

Ollie: Rec'd DEATH MONGERS here 7/2 & must say you've left Rocko in your wake writer-wise. I never read such bilge, as you know, but your first ten pages hooked even me; not only is B.d.S. less comic-book, more flesh & blood, but your POV is more real. More alive. Enough, already. Herewith are your contract copies. Money talks. Shayne.

He mouthed the words as he read, his '96 percent eidetic memory (that was in the bible too) recording everything. Something that must have been *boy oh boy oh boy* fell out of my mouth. It was him, the man from the book covers, the man I had spent the last year or so shoveling through eight kinds of screaming hell and Armageddon—nine kinds, if you counted *Spy Crusher* #21: *Bangkok Blowaway*, still in the works.

Yet it was not Rocko's Brock deSade, not the genetically perfect macho cartoon genuflecting to the gods of narrative economy that required establishing hero-images in terms of crude, Real Man clichés. This was not a *Gentleman's Quarterly* somatotype or a *Playboy* demi-god.

The man in my living/work/bedroom had a receding hairline. One of his front teeth overlapped the other by a scant millimeter or two. There was a hard little comma of pigment on his neck, like one of those pimples that never goes away by itself. Maybe he picked his nose, maybe he used Sweet 'N Low, maybe those shoes hurt his feet. He was out of Brock deSade's styrene mold, but with the imperfections any real human being would normally have. He was the difference between pulp casserole fiction and the living, breathing, sweaty item.

"I expected to be blown away on my own doorstep," I choked out at last.

"Oh, yes," he said, giving a dismissive wave of his hand. "All that *his perforated corpse arched through the air nonsense*. Did it ever occur to you, Mr. Lowenbruck, that anyone bashed over the skull as many times as I have been during the course of this series would have neither the presence of mind nor the equilibrium needed to fire a gun? Have you any idea of how the kick of a Magnum stings your shoulder socket, how the flash blinds you?" He

PULPMEISTER

stepped around one of my junkfiles on the bare wooden floor. "No, no, I'm not even armed. Here, I've brought the Kahlúa you abandoned at the store. Let's partake, and chat. We need to, desperately."

I couldn't stop watching him, as he pattered around doing maddeningly commonplace chores. He brewed coffee, poured two cups, and liberally spiked them with liquor. He rummaged through my second-hand desk and exhumed the stack of bond that equalled the first hundred manuscript pages of *Bangkok Blowaway*. He sat, sipped, crossed his legs, and pored over his own unpublished, current rampage.

More than once, he sneezed. He seemed to have some kind of mild summer bug. I got him some toilet paper.

I always hit a minor plot traffic jam around page 100. Up to that point, you vamp crazily in whatever digressive direction will absorb another five pages, and in so doing, make a paragraph of off-the-cuff outline transmogrify into 13,000 real, whole words. Between one and the other, you only get one chance to mortar up the gaps that sprout in story logic—all the *Spy Crushers* I'd ever turned in were deadlined so tightly that there was one draft, period. I literally made them up as I went along. After page 100, the story material expanded to fit the page count, rather than the reverse.

Brock dropped the manuscript on my pearcrate coffee table, and it scattered like a fan of playing cards. He massaged the bridge of his nose.

"We have got a problem," he said, eyes still accusing the paper on the table. "How long did it take you to . . . er, produce that?"

I backtracked. "I started last Saturday evening."

"Cocky about freewheeling through my life, aren't you?" The inflection had drained away, leaving his voice emotionless and metallic. "What's your rate? Ten thousand words a day? How in the devil am I supposed to gain any depth at ten thousand words a day, Oliver? No wonder that last one, *Grapevine of Doom*, was so stupid. Ten thousand words a day!?"

I refused to be cowed just because he was getting pissed off. "Wait a second. It's not my fault Tania Krebs picked that outline first! I put the damned things in numerical order; and it was number six of six, the one I cobbled up *after* I'd used all the good ideas up on the previous five! It's not easy trying to kick new spice into your formula, you know—the same basics have been rehashed five hundred times this season by all your competitors!"

Tania Krebs was letterheaded as a "senior editor" at Tensor, and *Spy Crusher* was her child. Her job was to insure that my contracts always arrived two days before deadline (so I'd sign just to get the cash), and badger me long-distance whenever the novels were undelivered with due-date looming. I

think we both knew that we were generating our respective doles by robbing the grave of Uncle Ian Fleming; we sifted his ashes to finer and finer consistency with each new book, until there was nothing left to turn in that grave and give us spine chills of guilt when the latest 200-plus pages were expressed off to New York.

I think Brock realized that, too, and it caused him to back down a little. "You're okay with plot and logic," he said. "You don't leave loose ends. What you're bad at is pacing." He picked up the manuscript. "Look here—you dicked around for eons in this chapter; you should have kept the focus on my escape from the cell." *Whack*; the paper met the table again. "What was the matter here? You run out of coffee? Or booze?"

His line was from *Corpse Gambit*, chapter six. I had written it months ago.

"That was a bricks-and-caulk chapter," I said. "Boring exposition, talking heads, I admit it. But I needed it to introduce Marta Long, otherwise the readers won't know—"

"That's another thing," he cut in. "Always with the centerfold girls—long legs, tan thighs, British accents, mammoth boobs. Jesus. The only thing you ever change is their hair color."

"I didn't think you'd ever object to a parade of beautiful women," I said, hurt now.

"These aren't women, these are *Cosmo* girls with Don Rickles's old sarcasm routines and terminal nymphomania. Why not once, just *once*, let me interface with a woman of substance, of personality, somebody *real*?"

"As real as you, huh?" I snapped. "Don't blame me for them, blame Tania Krebs—she's the one who keeps dunning me to 'make it rougher, make it *rougher*, sex and violence, *MAKE IT ROUGHER!* How do you think my manuscript for #18, *The Red Route*, became *Grenade Brigade Raid*?"

"You vas only followink orders, is that it?"

"I was dancing for dimes, hero. The contract says Writer-for-Hire, so you and I are *both* mercenaries."

Brock deSade's face paled. "Mercenary? Me? I'm a servant of my country; protecting the rights of—"

"Stow it in a trunk and maybe it'll accumulate some interest," I said. "You murder people. Blow off their arms and legs; garrote, axe, decapitate, bludgeon. You wiretap, entrap, break, enter, and generally piss all over the Constitution every time you step out of your office! If Nixon had had ten of you, he'd be a goddamned emperor by now!" I marched to the desk and yanked a drawer off its track. The ancient dado joints separated and the drawer sprang open like a flower. I retrieved a yellow folder from the junk it dumptrucked out onto the floor.

"This is Rocko's bible for you!" I yelled, fling-

ing it. "Take a good, long look at it. You're an independent, untaxed millionaire! You live on a hundred acres in the Rocky Mountains! Solar power and windmills on your estate! A private airstrip, thirty automobiles and a fucking collection of original Impressionists! What the hell would a person like that want with—"

"You didn't pay attention to the part about how Vietnam changed my consciousness," he said.

"You're one of the privileged super-rich, the booted and horsed. If Reagan had somebody as wealthy as you're supposed to be as an ally, what is he doing letting you risk your neck blowing banana dictators to smithereens? I mean, what in the hell do you pay someone who has unlimited bread for doing that?"

It reminded me of the basic flaw in *Mission: Impossible*, the longest-running spy show on tv. Forget about whether the ideology was right or wrong; Mr. Phelps, Barney and the gang must have been undercovering for real coolie wages if they had to pull nine straight years of stunts and raids. Just once, I wanted the Impossible Missions Force to comeback that stupid tape recorder with "*Forget that action, we might get killed! Besides, I've got enough in the bank this month.*" And the good old IMF was not composed of millionaires.

"I wouldn't expect you to understand my ethics," Brock said, suddenly very much in character. "Honor and loyalty aren't written into the standard contract, right?"

I was worried about rubbing one of his sore spots when it hit me that I *made up* those sore spots for a living.

"Listen," I said, mostly unafraid now. "In a ghost story, when a ghost makes a visitation, he wants something he didn't get in life. Usually vengeance. Revenge is the gasoline that powers most of those psychos your series is in competition with. But what wrong have I done you? I've given you what little life you've had for the past—" damn that I had to stop and think! "—uh, nine books."

"But Oliver, it's a two-dimensional life," he said. "Damn it, all I do is fuck and kill and unload flinty dialogue on characters who are even less corporeal than me. It's your approach that I can't stand anymore. And nobody, not even Brock deSade, can go on being clouted over the head eighteen times per book!"

"Eighteen?" I said, wincing.

"That's the average, including knockouts." He nodded gravely. "It's a violence device you don't seem able to resist."

Of course, he was right. DeSade, out cold, was a snappy chapter windup that translated as "action" to keep Tania Krebs from caterwauling. But it was nothing more than a device—cheap, expedient, illogical. The hack's hallmark.

"But what about your reason for being here?"



My fear of him was back. "You want to stop me from punishing your skull in the name of Male-Oriented Action Fiction?" I quoted the bible, expecting my last sight in this life to be the bore of his legendary Magnum.

"I'll admit I thought about offing you," he said. "If they found your headless body perched behind a typewriter containing a note to the effect you couldn't endure writing *Spy Crusher* anymore, there wouldn't even be an investigation. There'd be nine books as evidence you were punch-drunk from ultra-violence, crazy enough to blow your own head off with a Magnum identical to that wielded by your protagonist."

That's how I'd already figured it. Plotwise, I was still ahead of him, ghost or not.

"But, as I told you, I'm unarmed. We shouldn't fear each other. I think it reasonable to say we owe each other our lives—or could you live by eating the food spreads in *Redbook*, Oliver? I've hit upon a solution to the drabness of your formula."

"Hold it!" I said. "Don't blame me for the dreck Rocko Stovington reeled off his platen; that's ancient history. I made you a hell of a lot more likable than the repellent fascist asshole in that bible!"

The insult did not faze him. "True, you seem to have made me whole enough. But you didn't energize the series with the same sort of drive that led you to improve me. You began to repeat your plots with the fourth book."

I fought not to scream. Brock deSade was telling the author of his own adventures that he was a sub-par writer. "Are you telling me I'm finished? Who's going to keep you going?"

"You are."

"Then who's going to write the books?"
He grinned and shot his bolt: "Me."

'O liver? This is Tania Krebs." It was as certain as the toast falling jelly-side down, her call. "Hello Tania," I said. "How are—"

"Where's the manuscript?" This was Tania's idea of subtlety; something to put her writers at ease, make them a comfortable part of a give-and-take working relationship. It was easy to envision her calling from a dungeon, phone held in one leather-winged claw.

My answer came by rote. The deadline for *Bangkok Blowaway* was still a week distant.

"We need that material on time, Oliver. We have schedules." She was a human answer-phone; the same message tape every time in that nasty, nasal, New Jersey twang: "Can you send us the first hundred pages? We've got to see some product."

"I'm in final rewrite," I fibbed.

Across the room, Brock deSade hunched over my typewriter, averaging about seven words a minute. His tan suit was balled into a makeshift pillow on the sofa. Near him, amid the chaos on the desktop, my coffeepot stood sentry, a silver ding in its side from when he returned the carriage on my Smith-Corona manual too vehemently and sent it flying. I could have sent Tania Krebs my own first hundred pages, but now they were stuck together with what would indubitably look like dried blood. *Tap tap tap*. His tongue was stuck out in concentration; the suggestion of mental power was comic for the amount of paper actually being produced. *Tap tap*.

"Don't get so antsy, Tania, you'll have it by—" I consulted the red circles on my Texaco calendar—"the fifteenth. 'Original, complete, and finished,'" I said, throwing her all-encompassing contractese back at her. "Have I ever lied to you?"

"You never call," she whined. "I never know what kind of progress you're making."

"I just told you." *Tap tap. Tap.*

"Why can't you check in with us, let us know where to send galleys, keep us updated? Not often, say, once a week? So we're both current?" My mother used to address me in the same tone, whenever she thought I wasn't paying attention. Down deep, Mom couldn't stand me, either.

"Sure thing, Tania," I lied again. "Listen, I've got to run. On your behalf. The story is flowing and the machine is hot ..." I had a mini-flash of Rocko Stovington, word-milling porn in those terms, while a tv set at his feet blared out a commercial for Wendy's burgers—the hot and juicy kind.

"Just get it in on time, Oliver." Still the reproach, the patronizing superiority. Fuck her galleys.

"Bye, Tania." Click. *Tap*.

"I got ten more pages while you were snoring

through reruns of *Wild Wild West*," Brock said, not looking up from the machine. A smoldering cigarette hung out of his mouth; I hadn't noticed when it replaced the tongue. I hadn't known Brock deSade smoked. He flicked a long ash into my Dunes ashtray and it spattered across my change. "I think it's beginning to, you know, assume some coherency. I rewrote the outline you saw yesterday." He sounded hopeful.

Except for Brock's glitter-eyed enthusiasm—and the absence of a fingerprinty glass of bourbon—the whole scene was straight out of Chandler. Stylized. Something clicked inside my head. Something sickening.

Brock deSade looked and sounded like a tyro.

There, in front of me, was everything those *Writer's Digest* bromides suggested was amateur. The guy with the great novel in his head and no time to write it. The guy with the elbow-patched cord jacket. Pipe in the pocket. *A. Author, Esq.*, Hollywoodus Bigmouthus. Which meant—

"Give that to me," I said abruptly. "Where are you at?"

"Fight scene," he said. "Chapter four."

I grabbed his short stack of finished copy, clicking on the sofa lamp. It took me about five minutes to read from front to back.

It was not *precisely* disastrous.

Throughout my oppressively silent reading I could feel him watching me, and he pounced as soon as I leafed up his final page. "Well? Is that a fresh perspective, or what?"

I dropped it on the coffee table—*smack*. His white draft fanned and mingled with my brown one.

"It's fresh, all right," I said. "Like fish. It still stinks."

He got reflexively defensive: "What's wrong with it?"

"Look at it," I said, picking up a sheet at random. "He shut the door because outside it was raining." Apart from the syntax, rain doesn't just rain in this type of book. It *sheets earthward in an icy torrent*, it *drives mercilessly*, it *patters down mournfully*, it *pounds the sinuses and streets of the city into waterlogged submission beneath a gunmetal-grey sky!*" I scanned the page brutally. "You need to manipulate adjectives, to maximize verbiage, to project deSade's cocky, hipper-than-thou smart-ass-ness. This deSade couldn't intimidate a librarian! The plotting is verve-less, preschool junk! Your bible specifies a 'crisp, page-turner mystery-action style.' What you have here would bore a proofreader to death!"

Brock deSade, Spy Crusher, suddenly resembled a Saint Bernard puppy caught with a Gucci slipper in his teeth and a gallon of piddle on the Persian rug. For the quarter-second before his eyes resumed their accustomed steeliness, they looked like they were about to start leaking bright tears. Had I ac-

tually hurt his feelings?

"That's your professional opinion, is it?" His *timbre of authority* quavered, just noticeably.

I never thought I'd feel sorry for a repellent fascist asshole.

But New York steak is shit and shit is New York steak, depending on the alimentary direction one takes, so backpedal I did. Maybe I could salvage enough of his ego to keep him from decking me with a wheel kick.

"Look, look, your perspective is good," I said, realizing I sounded like a no-talent Fiction 101 instructor. "But your execution strangles it. This narrative line wouldn't hook your own mother." Oops—did Brock deSade have a mommy? Did I give him a mommy? "But this stuff about leaping off the Red Wall into the dogs and barbed wire has the ring of experience."

"You have your profession, and I have mine," he said, trying to look tough.

It crashed home. I had made Brock deSade a front-rank Spy Crusher, but not a good writer. I hadn't even made him a good *typist*.

"That's it—you *know* exactly what a bullet zinging past your ear sounds like!" I shouted. "You've been tortured, carcashed and pummelled by *experts*! You've made love to women so pneumatic they could exist only in violence fiction! You know everything about computers, politics, spy gimmicks, foreign protocol! For you to exist at all, you have to be an authority on all of that—" I groped for the word "—all of that *bullshit*."

Sullenly, he said, "But all that considered, the series is nothing without you, is that what you're saying?"

"Quiet," I said, pushing past him to get at the shuffled-together drafts on the coffee table. "I think I've figured out a way for you to do what you want without cutting me out of a job." I snatched up Rocko's dogeared bible for the series. My heart was pounding harder than a landlord on a locked door.

The phone rang, breaking up that golden moment.

"That'll be Tania Krebs again. Unplug her."

In a fast fifteen minutes I reeled out two solid pages of inserts for the bible, drowned in enough pretensions to literary excellence to make even the ghost of Papa Hemmingway emit a macho little choke. Brock deSade ate it up avidly, even the part about his ability to type 150 words a minute with no errors. I stapled the new material into the Spy Crusher bible between the pages of dreck describing his "scholarly activism shoulder-to-shoulder with the Vietnam Vets Against the War" and the tear-jerking tragedy of his late spouse, "the most beautiful woman Brock had ever known, accidentally killed by a bomb in the ladies room of a Belfast department store."

The first thing he did was offer to get some booze from the Alpha Beta market, for celebration purposes. At least he was behaving like a writer now.

As soon as he was out the door I grabbed the bible and my trusty white-out. Most of the gunk I had just conceived was padding; I found the most disposable paragraph of it and nimbly obliterated it with the correction fluid, to give me writing room. It was impossible to roll a stapled pile of forty pages into my machine, and if I pulled the staples out again the tampering might be noticed. The old white-out took nearly five minutes to dry completely, but when it stopped reflecting the desk light I took my Pentel Rolling Writer and scribbled in:

But deSade's most salient characteristic is a fierce, nearly Sicilian loyalty regarding friendship and those who are his allies. For this elite inner circle of comrades, no request is too large to serve his overdeveloped sense of honor. Those who take advantage of or exploit his friendship are ruthlessly eliminated, but for those who help him in his quest for justice, nothing is too much to ask of him.

And I had a sound business proposition for the Spy Crusher that returned from the store.

He never read the revisions. He figured he knew his own bible by heart already.



Tensor forwards mail to us by the sack these days. I framed the very first fan letter over my work area, next to Shayne Byrne's yellowed memo.

My new work area.

7/13/81

Dear Mr. Gunn:

I have never written a letter like this to any Author before, but felt I should take some of your valuable time to compliment you on your Brock deSade books, of which I've been a fan for quite some time. Since *Bangkok Blowaway* (15 books ago) the series has assumed dimensions of authenticity uncommon to your "normal" spy rampages.

Having worked in both foreign and domestic CIA posts in addition to pulling some mercenary gigs in Africa and El Salvador, I'm convinced you've seen similar action firsthand. Your unerring eye for gritty detail satisfies someone like me. Yet deSade has grown to become unique, multidimensional, even sensitive—a human man instead of a caricature. It's nice to know someone out there knows whereof he writes. Thanks for many hours of reading pleasure. And keep 'em coming hard!

Jefferson "Big Zack" Trumball
(Major, USAF, Retired)

Tania Krebs doesn't bother us too much, beyond sending multibook contracts and checks together these days. Tensor, thanks to the success of the *Spy Crusher* line, has launched both Scimitar Books (mainstream paperback originals) and Aardvark, a quality-reprint line. Shooting on the first Brock deSade movie just wrapped over at Paramount.

An entire room of my cottage is devoted to my work center. I have dual readout screens, with mag carts and floppy-disc capacity. I don't even have to look at Brock unless I want to—he lives on the other side of our Rocky Mountain tract, a hundred acres away.

I'm his employee. Sort of. He is, after all, an independent, untaxed millionaire.

Having to hang around here on the "farm" is a bitch, but Brock and I have agreed to dissolve our partnership after one hundred *Spy Crushers* are in print—past that point, the series can renew itself via reprints and films, gaining a life of its own. So to speak.

I'm in the John Jakes seat with Tensor; that's the reason Brock can't just dump me in a river with stone loafers. Oliver Lowenbruck is the only person who does *Spy Crushers* that are heavy sellers, and Brock deSade sure can't do the autograph sessions, the meetings in New York, or the media appearances.

I just glance at what he sends over, put my cover sheet on it, and off it goes. Tania Krebs and her editorial munchkins never noticed the style switch; they were too dazzled by the sales figures. Brock's plot inspirations make absolutely no sense to me, but like he says, the military sales are up. Some newspaper found a *Spy Crusher* novel on Reagan's nightstand last week.

Besides, I just don't have time for that sort of writing anymore. I'm editing a "classics" series for Aardvark, I have two original novels in galley at Scimitar, and—at last—a hardcover from New American Library, next October; a prestige Christmas release, with my real name on the spine.

There's only a single dark note I can think of.

When *Spy Crusher* really blasted off, with our revision of *Bangkok Blowaway* (we just completed #47: *Den of Rovers*, so I'm halfway home and still young), good old Rocko Stovington tried to steal the series back for himself. Tania Krebs told him to take a hike after his last book, *Lucy, the Moist*, bombed. He became so obnoxious that Shayne Byrne dropped him as a client. And his personal life got so decrepit that his lover shot him in the face with a target pistol, during a quarrel over who was sleeping with whom.

Her name was Corinne, I think. 17

Answers to THE "UNHAPPY IS HE" QUIZ REVISITED

1. "My Favorite Murder" by Ambrose Bierce. 2. "Hop-Frog" by Edgar Allan Poe. 3. "The Faceless God" by Robert Bloch. 4. "The Fire of Assurbanipal" by Robert E. Howard. 5. "Carmilla" by J. Sheridan Le Fanu. 6. "Leiningen versus the Ants" by Carl Stephenson. 7. "Man Overboard!" by Winston Churchill. 8. "The Curse of Yig" by Zealia Bishop. 9. "Judgment Day" by L. Sprague de Camp. 10. "The Red Room" by H. G. Wells. 11. "The Loved Dead" by C. M. Eddy, Jr. 12. "Coming Attraction" by Fritz Leiber. 13. "A Boy and His Dog" by Harlan Ellison. 14. "The King of the Cats" by Stephen Vincent Benet. 15. "The Small Assassin" by Ray Bradbury. 16. "To Serve Man" by Damon Knight. 17. "The

Lady, or the Tiger?" by Frank R. Stockton. 18. "The Diary of Adam and Eve" by Mark Twain. 19. "The Head and the Feet" by C. S. Forester. 20. "A Christmas Carol" by Charles Dickens. 21. "The Most Dangerous Game" by Richard Connell. 22. "Fishhead" by Irvin S. Cobb. 23. "The Thing in the Cellar" by David H. Keller. 24. "The Call of Cthulhu" by H. P. Lovecraft. 25. "The Testament of Athammaus" by Clark Ashton Smith. 26. "Sredni Vashtar" by Saki. 27. "They" by Robert A. Heinlein. 28. "Distressing Tale of Thangobrinde the Jeweller" by Lord Dunsany. 29. "The Mark of the Beast" by Rudyard Kipling. 30. "Flowers For Algernon" by Daniel Keyes.

TV's Twilight Zone: Part Twenty-One

CONTINUING MARC SCOTT ZICREE'S
SHOW-BY-SHOW GUIDE TO THE ENTIRE
TWILIGHT ZONE TELEVISION SERIES,
COMPLETE WITH ROD SERLING'S OPENING
AND CLOSING NARRATIONS

*"You unlock this door with the key of imagination.
Beyond it is another dimension—a dimension of
sound, a dimension of sight, a dimension of mind.
You're moving into a land of both shadow and
substance, of things and ideas. You've just crossed
over into the Twilight Zone."*



135. THE LONG MORROW

Written by Rod Serling
Producer: William Froug
Director: Robert Florey
Dir. of Photography: George T. Clemens
Music: Stock

Cast

Com. Douglas Stansfield: Robert Lansing
Sandra Horn: Mariette Hartley
Dr. Bixler: George MacReady
Gen. Walters: Edward Binns
Technician: William Swan

"It may be said with a degree of assurance that not everything that meets the eye is as it appears. Case in point: the scene you're watching. This is not a hospital, not a morgue, not a mausoleum, not an undertaker's parlor of the future. What it is is the belly of a spaceship. It is en route to another planetary system an incredible distance from the Earth. This is the crux of our story, a flight into space. It is also the story of the things that might happen to human beings who take a step beyond, unable to anticipate everything that might await them out there. . . . Commander Douglas Stansfield, astronaut, a man about to embark on one of history's longest journeys—forty years out into endless space and hopefully back



again. This is the beginning, the first step toward man's longest leap into the unknown. Science has solved the mechanical details, and now it's up to one human being to breathe life into blueprints and computers, to prove once and for all that man can live half a lifetime in the total void of outer space, forty years alone in the unknown. This is Earth. Ahead lies a planetary system. The vast region in between is the Twilight Zone."

A month prior to leaving for deep space, Stansfield meets Sandra Horn, a warm and attractive Space Agency employee. The two fall in love, but both realize that it is a tragic affair. When Stansfield returns from his mission—kept in suspended animation for most of it—he will still

be in his early thirties, but Sandra will be an old woman. Soon after Stansfield departs, however, Sandra has herself put into hibernation. When Stansfield returns she is revived, still a young woman of twenty-six. But General Walters has some bad news for her: six months into the mission, Stansfield—for love of her—turned off his suspended animation. He is now an old man of seventy!

"Commander Douglas Stansfield, one of the forgotten pioneers of the space age. He's been pushed aside by the flow of progress and the passage of years—and the ferocious travesty of fate. Tonight's tale of the ionosphere and irony, delivered from—the Twilight Zone."

136. THE SELF-IMPROVEMENT OF SALVADORE ROSS

Written by Jerry McNeely
Based on Henry Slesar's short story
Producer: Bert Granet
Director: Don Siegel
Dir. of Photography: George T. Clemens
Music: Stock

Cast

Salvadore Ross: Don Gordon
Leah Maitland: Gail Kobe
Mr. Maitland: Vaughn Taylor
Old Man: J. Pat O'Malley
Albert: Doug Lambert
Mr. Halpert: Douglass Dumbrille
Jerry: Seymour Cassel
Bartender: Ted Jacques
Nurse: Kathleen O'Malley

"Confidential personnel file on Salvatore Ross. Personality: a volatile mixture of fury and frustration. Distinguishing physical characteristic: a badly broken hand which will require emergency treatment at the nearest hospital. Ambition: shows great determination toward self-improvement. Estimate of potential success: a sure bet for a

listing in Who's Who—in the Twilight Zone."

When Leah Maitland, his former social worker, rejects his romantic overtures, Ross angrily punches a door and breaks his hand. Admitted to a hospital, he makes the acquaintance of an elderly patient suffering from severe bronchial congestion. Facetiously, Ross suggests they trade ailments; the old man agrees. Later that night, Ross finds to his amazement that it has worked—he now has a cold but no broken arm! Utilizing his bizarre talent, Ross trades forty-six years of his life to an aged millionaire in exchange for a million dollars and a posh apartment. He then buys back his youth from a variety of young men, a few years at a time. His vitality restored, he sets about courting Leah in style. But it's no use; Leah wants a man with compassion, a trait her crippled father has in abundance. Although Mr. Maitland objects strongly to him, Ross convinces him to sell him his compassion for \$100,000. Now filled



with compassion, Ross easily wins Leah's love. But when he tells her father of his plans to marry her and asks his blessing, the compassionless Mr. Maitland pulls a gun and kills him.

"The Salvatore Ross program for self-improvement. The all-in-one, surefire success course that lets you lick the bully, learn the language, dance the tango and anything else you want to do—or think you want to do. Money-back guarantee. Offer limited to . . . the Twilight Zone."

137. NUMBER TWELVE LOOKS JUST LIKE YOU

Written by John Tomerlin
(credited to Charles Beaumont)
Based on the short story
"The Beautiful People"
by Charles Beaumont
Producer: William Froug
Director: Abner Biberman
Dir. of Photography: Charles Wheeler
Music: Stock

Cast

Marilyn Cuberle: Collin Wilcox
#12/Lana Cuberle/Simmons/Doe/
Grace/Jane/Patient: Suzy Parker
Uncle Rick/Dr. Rex/Sigmund Friend/
Dr. Tom/Orderly: Richard Long
Valerie/Marilyn (after operation)/
#8: Pam Austin

"Given the chance, what young girl wouldn't happily exchange a plain face for a lovely one? What girl could refuse the opportunity to be beautiful? For want of a better estimate, let's call it the year 2000. At any rate,

imagine a time in the future when science has developed a means of giving everyone the face and body he dreams of. It may not happen tomorrow—but it happens now in the Twilight Zone."

At the age of nineteen, people in this world of the future undergo the supposedly voluntary Transformation, which makes them beautifully identical to millions of others. But eighteen-year-old Marilyn Cuberle, whose freethinking father committed suicide after his Transformation, thinks the operation is merely a way of enforcing conformity—she wants to keep her own face. Her mother Lana, Uncle Rick and friend Valerie all view this as an aberration. Marilyn is sent to a doctor, then to a psychiatrist—who puts her in the hospital. Marilyn tries to escape, but finds herself in an operating room—with a doctor and nurse waiting for her. She emerges with nothing but joy in her mind, looking



and thinking just like Valerie. The Transformation has been a complete success.

"Portrait of a young lady in love—with herself. Improbable? Perhaps. But in an age of plastic surgery, body building and an infinity of cosmetics, let us hesitate to say impossible. These and other strange blessings may be waiting in the future—which after all, is the Twilight Zone." 17



Living Doll

by Charles Beaumont

THE ORIGINAL
TELEVISION SCRIPT
FIRST AIRED ON CBS-TV
NOVEMBER 1, 1963

Erich StreatorTelly Savalas
AnnabelleMary LaRoche
ChristieTracy Stratford
Voice of Talky Tina ...June Foray

FADE ON:

1. EXT. STREATOR HOUSE FULL SHOT DAY

An attractive, two-story residence in a tract. Well-kept lawn, carefully cultivated flower beds, manicured bushes, and a driveway to a rear two-car garage. A fairly new car comes down the street and into the driveway.

2. REAR OF HOUSE ANGLE TO GARAGE

The car is stopped just before the garage, and ANNABELLE STREATOR, a housewife of about 30, calmly attractive, gets out from behind the wheel with several small packages. CHRISTIE STREATOR, about six, gets out on the other side with a large box, runs around to join her mother. They approach the CAMERA; when they are in MED. CLOSE SHOT, Annabelle puts her hand on Christie's shoulder, looks down to her as Christie looks up.

ANNABELLE

Now remember, honey. I want you to run upstairs with the package.

CHRISTIE

Can't Daddy see it?

ANNABELLE

Not right away. Do you understand?

CHRISTIE

Yes, Mommy.

They start for the back door.

3. INT. HOUSE STUDY MED. SHOT ERICH STREATOR

A comfortable, small study. ERICH STREATOR, about 35, sits at a small desk, frowning. Before him is a large check book and the desk is covered with bills. His sleeves are rolled up, his collar open; his tie loosened. We hear the offscreen SOUND of a door OPENING, CLOSING. He looks up.

4. ANGLE TO DOOR

Erich moving to the door as Annabelle and Christie reach it. Christie hesitates, looking at her father.

ERICH

Hi. What did you buy?

ANNABELLE

Nothing much.

(to Christie)

Go on, Christie.

Christie gives her mother a look of despair before she

turns to start off.

ERICH

Wait a minute, Christie.

What have you got there?

Christie turns to answer, but Annabelle says:

ANNABELLE

It's just a doll, Erich.

Christie awaits the outcome.

ERICH

She doesn't need another doll.

ANNABELLE

It's one she's had her eye on for months.

ERICH

I thought we agreed -

Annabelle makes a pained face, brushes past him.

5. ANOTHER ANGLE

Annabelle moving to the studio couch to put down her purchases.

ANNABELLE

(to Christie)

You might as well open it.

Christie moves in with Erich; she is beaming, can't get the lid off the box quickly enough.

CHRISTIE

She's alive, Daddy, and her name's Talky Tina.

She withdraws an ugly doll about half her size.

ERICH
(annoyed)
For heaven's sake,
Annabelle, a doll that big—

ANNABELLE
I put it on the account.

CHRISTIE
Tina does everything!

6. CLOSE SHOT CHRISTIE

Christie fascinatedly winds a
key in the back of the doll.

CHRISTIE
She moves and walks and
she can even talk and I just
love her already.

The doll writhes in a ghastly
slow motion. Christie pulls a
ring on the side of the doll's
neck, lets it go.

DOLL
My name is Talky Tina and
I love you very much.

Christie giggles, looks toward
her offscreen parents for their
reaction, pulling the ring
again.

7. TWO SHOT ANNABELLE AND ERICH

Annabelle watches the
offscreen Christie with
amusement. Erich is grim.

DOLL'S VOICE
My name is Talky Tina and
I love you very much.

ERICH
All right. How much did it
cost?

ANNABELLE
I told you I—

ERICH
I know. You charged it.
How much did it cost?

ANNABELLE
(reticently)
Twenty-three ninety-five.

ERICH
(aghast)
Twenty-three ninety-five?

DOLL'S VOICE
My name is Talky Tina and
I love you very much.

ANNABELLE
But dear, a doll like that—

8. ANGLE TO CHRISTIE

Absorbedly pulling the ring
again.

ERICH'S VOICE
(in misery)
That's all we need, a doll
that talks.

DOLL
My name is Talky Tina and
I love you very much.

Erich ENTERS FRAME.

ERICH
(sharply)
Will you please shut that
thing off!

Christie, wrenched from her
fascination, turns frightened
eyes to her father, sees his
wrath. She drops the doll to
the studio couch, starts to run
from the room, crying.

9. FULL SHOT STUDY

Christie running out,
Annabelle darting a withering
look to Erich before starting
after her.

ANNABELLE
Christie ...

10. ANGLE TO DOLL

It writhes on the studio couch,
its eyes closed, the CAMERA
MOVING IN. The doll slows
down, stops, and when
CAMERA is in CLOSE SHOT,
the eyes jerk wide open.

SERLING'S VOICE
Talky Tina, the doll that
does everything, a lifelike
creation of plastic and
springs and painted smile.

11. SHOT SERLING

SERLING
To Erich Streator, she is a
most unwelcome addition to
his household—but without
her, he'd never enter the
Twilight Zone.

FADE ON:

12. INT. STREATOR HOUSE CHRISTIE'S BEDROOM DAY

Annabelle sits on Christie's
bed, drying Christie's tears
with a handkerchief. Erich
stands nearby looking neutral.

ANNABELLE
It's all right, honey. Daddy
says we can keep the doll.

Erich makes a wry face.
Christie looks to him to see if
her mother is telling the truth.

13. CLOSE SHOT ERICH

Trying to smile.
ERICH
I promise, Christie.

14. BACK TO SCENE

ANNABELLE
(to Christie)
See?

Erich sighs, moves to leave the
room.

ERICH
Man is helpless in the face
of a female alliance.
(beat)
I'll be downstairs.

He goes out. Annabelle smiles
at Christie.

15. ANGLE PAST STUDY DOOR

Erich comes down the stairs,
moves to the study door.

16. INT. STUDY FULL SHOT

Erich coming in, going to the
desk, moving some papers
around, then looking toward
the doll.

17. ANGLE TO STUDIO COUCH

Erich moving to look down at
the doll darkly. He picks it
up, winds the key. The doll
writhes grotesquely. He looks
at it distastefully.

18. CLOSE ON ERICH

He pulls the ring, lets it go.

FADE OUT

Living Doll

DOLL

My name is Talky Tina and I don't think I like you.

Erich reacts, blinks, lets the doll run down. When it stops writhing, he pulls the ring again.

DOLL

My name is Talky Tina and I think I could even hate you.

Erich flares, throws the doll across the room. It hits the wall with a dull THUMP.

19. CLOSE ON DOLL

It writhes slowly, stops, its eyes on Erich offscreen.

DOLL

My name is Talky Tina . . . and you'll be sorry.

20. ANGLE PAST ERICH IN FOREGROUND

and TOWARD door. He stares at the offscreen doll as Annabelle comes in to stand beside him, looking first at him and then at the offscreen doll.

ANNABELLE

Erich.

She starts for the doll.

21. ANGLE TO DOLL

Annabelle picking up the doll, turning to Erich vexedly as he ENTERS FRAME with residual anger.

ANNABELLE

Why, Erich?

ERICH

I don't like what it says.

ANNABELLE

You didn't have to throw it.

ERICH

It has quite a vocabulary. (taking doll; pulling ring)

Listen.

DOLL

My name is Talky Tina and I love you very much.

ERICH

(staring at doll)

That's not what it said a

minute ago.

22. ANGLE TO DOOR

Christie coming in, CAMERA FOLLOWING her to Annabelle and Erich. When she puts up her hands for the doll, Erich draws it away.

ERICH

Not just now.

CHRISTIE

(face clouding)

But Daddy -

He gets down on his haunches to face her.

ERICH

Christie, honey, listen . . .

ANNABELLE

Erich, you promised.

Reluctantly, he gives her the doll. As she moves off, she pulls the ring.

23. ANGLE TO DOOR

Christie carrying the doll out in such a way that when it opens its eyes it seems to stare at Erich.

DOLL

My name is Talky Tina and I love you very much.

24. CLOSE SHOT ERICH

Puzzled, not sure if his senses have deceived him.

DISSOLVE:

25. INT. DINING ROOM ANGLE TO TABLE

Annabelle, Christie and Erich seated eating their dinner, the doll in an old high chair. Christie pretends to feed the doll as a mother would.

CHRISTIE

Be a good girl, Tina, and eat your supper.

ERICH

Eat your own supper, Christie.

They eat in silence.

26. CLOSE SHOT ERICH

He eats, glowers across the

table.

27. P.O.V. SHOT THE DOLL

It stares back insolently.

28. GROUP FAVORING ERICH

He is annoyed with the doll's unblinking gaze.

ERICH

Christie, isn't there some way to close her eyes?

CHRISTIE

But Tina's eating, Daddy.

ERICH

(after a pause)

I don't see why you had to bring her to the table.

29. TWO SHOT ERICH AND ANNABELLE

Erich turning to Annabelle.

ERICH

I've never seen such hideous eyes.

ANNABELLE

She's just a doll.

(beat)

And Christie needs her.

Erich looks at her sharply.

ERICH

Lacking a brother or sister, is that what you mean?

ANNABELLE

(stiffly)

I didn't say that.

ERICH

But it's why you bought it, so I'd have a reminder.

Annabelle gives him a cold look, gets up, stacking her dishes.

ANNABELLE

(stonily)

It hadn't occurred to me . . . but if that's what you think -

The front door chime SOUNDS. Annabelle turns, moves off.

30. ANGLE TO TABLE

Annabelle leaving the room, Erich finishing his meal, Christie winding the doll.

Offscreen a door OPENS.

LINDA'S VOICE

Can Christie play?

Christie gets off her chair.
Annabelle comes to the doorway.

ANNABELLE

It's Linda. Are you through with your dinner?

CHRISTIE

Yes, Mommy ... Can I take Tina?

ANNABELLE

Not outside. You can show her to Linda later.

Christie goes. Annabelle ignores Erich, starts to clear the table. Erich lights a cigarette, watches her. The offscreen door OPENS and CLOSES. The doll slowly writhes in the high chair. Annabelle goes out to the kitchen.

31. SHOT DOLL

Slowing down, blinking its eyes.

DOLL

My name is Talky Tina and I'm beginning to hate you.

32. SHOT ERICH

Reacting, glowering, then controlling himself, smiling.

ERICH

My name is Erich. Streator and I think I'm going to get rid of you.

33. SHOT DOLL

Wide-open stare.

DOLL

You wouldn't dare.

34. TWO SHOT ERICH AND DOLL

His smile broadens.

ERICH

Wouldn't I?

Getting up, he moves over to the doll, picks it up, CAMERA MOVING IN.



DOLL

Annabelle would hate you ...
Christie would hate you ...
and I would hate you.

35. ANGLE TO DOOR TO KITCHEN

Annabelle comes in, CAMERA FOLLOWING her to the table where she picks up more dishes. She glances to Erich with the doll, hesitates. Erich smiles, nods to the doll.

ERICH

Just seeing how it works.

Annabelle turns away, picks up the dishes, goes out.

36. SHOT ERICH

Amusedly examining the doll, probing here and there, looking at all the joints. He pulls on a leg, twisting it a little.

DOLL

Oh!

ERICH

So you have feelings?

DOLL

Doesn't everything?

ERICH

(wide grin)

Then I could hurt you.

DOLL

Not really. But I could hurt you.

ERICH

(with a laugh)

Threats from a doll!

37. ANGLE PAST ERICH

To the door to the kitchen, which opens, Annabelle coming in, stopping, looking around.

ANNABELLE

Who were you talking to?

He moves to her with the doll, still smiling. He hands it to her.

ERICH

Here. The game's over.

She takes the doll, stares at him innocently.

ANNABELLE

Game?

ERICH

Oh, come on, now. How dense do you think I am?

ANNABELLE

I wish I knew what you were talking about.

38. ANGLE PAST

ANNABELLE AND ERICH

and TOWARD table. He moves

Living Doll

to the table to get his coffee cup.

ERICH

I admit I haven't kept up with the times. I didn't know they were putting walkie-talkies in dolls.

ANNABELLE

Walkie-talkies?

He joins her with his coffee cup.

ERICH

Come off it, Annabelle.

Didn't you think I'd catch on? All that stuff about hating me—and that last bit about feelings.

(mimicking doll)

Doesn't everyone?

(normal voice)

You should be in comedy.

(moving off)

I need more coffee.

Annabelle stares at him, bewildered. She turns at the SOUND of the front door OPENING, CLOSING.

39. ANGLE TO DINING ROOM DOORWAY

Christie coming in with LINDA, a girl about her age. CAMERA FOLLOWING them to Annabelle.

CHRISTIE

Linda wants to see Tina.

Annabelle hands her the doll.

ANNABELLE

(absently)

Here you are, dear.

Annabelle moves worriedly toward and through the door to the kitchen as CAMERA MOVES IN on Christie and Linda. Christie winds the doll.

CHRISTIE

Watch.

Linda watches wide-eyed as the doll writhes. Christie pulls the ring.

DOLL

My name is Talky Tina and I love you very much.

Both girls giggle with pleasure. They start off.

LINDA

Let me do it.

40. ANGLE PAST TABLE IN FOREGROUND

and TOWARD kitchen door, Erich coming through it with his coffee, Annabelle behind him.

ANNABELLE

You can think whatever you want to, but it's not true.

Erich puts his coffee cup down on the table, sits down, his face in profile, Annabelle moving to him, standing.

ANNABELLE

I'm not playing a trick on you.

ERICH

Go ahead, pretend, but I know you've got a microphone around here somewhere.

(almost desperately)

You must have.

ANNABELLE

The doll says only one thing.

ERICH

I notice it never talks when you're in the room with me.

Annabelle, seeing his certainty, sinks to a chair and stares at him, disturbed.

ANNABELLE

You're really serious.

He grimaces extravagantly, sips his coffee.

ANNABELLE

You really mean it.

ERICH

(harshly)

Of course I mean it.

(beat)

So tell me.

ANNABELLE

(almost a wail)

But there's nothing to tell!

41. SHOT ERICH

Getting angrily to his feet, pushing his chair back.

ERICH

All right, don't tell me. Keep your secret.

He stomps out of the room, CAMERA FOLLOWING.

42. EXT. HOUSE

CHRISTIE AND LINDA

The door to the house in the background. They sit on the front steps with the doll, Linda winding it. The door opens, Erich coming out in an agitated state, lighting a cigarette, seeing them. The doll makes its movements. Linda pulls the ring. Erich looks at them calculatingly, turns to look down the street.

DOLL

My name is Talky Tina and I love you very much.

Erich joins them.

ERICH

How would you kids like some ice cream?

CHRISTIE

(jumping up)

Linda, too?

ERICH

Sure.

(digs for change)

There's the truck down the street.

He gives them some money. they move to start off, Christie with the doll.

ERICH

Leave the doll here, Christie.

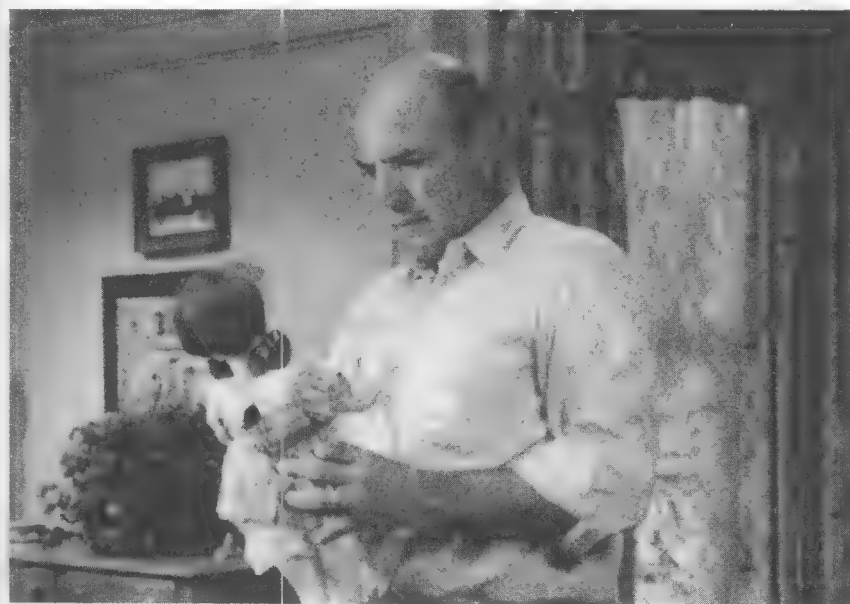
She relinquishes the doll; they move off quickly. Erich watches them go, then looks down at the doll with distaste and distrust. He looks toward the windows and then back to the doll before starting off.

43. ANGLE TO REAR OF HOUSE

Erich ENTERING FRAME and moving toward a garbage can, the doll under his arm.

44. SHOT ERICH

At the garbage can, reaching



for the lid.

DOLL
Oooh—are you going to be sorry!

Erich hesitates but for a moment. Then, with a victorious smile, he tosses the doll in, clamps the lid back on, snorts contemptuously, moves off.

DISSOLVE:

45. INT. STUDY
FULL SHOT NIGHT
Erich seated in a comfortable chair reading a newspaper. Christie runs to him, from the doorway.

CHRISTIE
Where's Tina, Daddy?

46. MED. TWO SHOT
ERICH AND CHRISTIE
Erich stiffens but does not look up from the paper.

ERICH
I wouldn't know.

CHRISTIE
You had her, Daddy.

ERICH
Go ask your mother.

47. ANGLE TO DOOR
Annabelle standing there, aloof.

ANNABELLE
She's already asked me.

48. SHOT ERICH
Looking up.

ERICH
(an accusation)
And what did you tell her?

CAMERA DRAWS BACK TO INCLUDE Christie and Annabelle, who joins them.

ANNABELLE
That you'd know where she is.

CHRISTIE
Where is she, Daddy?

Erich goes back to his newspaper.

ERICH
(coldly)
If your mother can't tell you, then neither can I.

49. SHOT ANNABELLE
Disturbed by his attitude, but controlling herself, turning to Christie, putting her arm around her.

ANNABELLE
Tina must be somewhere about, Christie. Let's look for her.

They start off.

50. SHOT ERICH
Waiting until they are out of the room, then lowering the paper to look after them, his face a study.

CUT TO:

51. CLOSE SHOT TELEPHONE

It RINGS. The CAMERA DRAWS BACK to INCLUDE Erich, who puts down the paper, getting up and moving to the phone, picking it up.

ERICH
Hello?

Erich reacts as he hears:

DOLL'S VOICE
(filtered)
My name is Talky Tina and I am going to kill you.

ERICH
(after a pause)
Who is this? ... Annabelle?

He clicks the receiver several times.

ERICH
Hello? Hello?

He slams the phone down in anger, abruptly starts off.

52. EXT. HOUSE ANGLE TO BACK DOOR NIGHT
The door opens, Erich coming out, CAMERA FOLLOWING him to the garbage can.

53. CLOSE ON GARBAGE CAN
Erich taking the lid off, leaning the garbage can TOWARD CAMERA so that we can see, with him, that it is empty. CAMERA MOVES IN on his face as he lets the garbage can rock back to its original position, sets the lid back on, then turns to stare offscreen with an expression of uneasiness.

FADE OUT

FADE IN:

54. INT. HOUSE DINING ROOM ANGLE TO DOOR
Erich comes through the door

Living Doll



to the kitchen in a rage.

ERICH
Annabelle!

He crosses to the doorway to the hall, CAMERA FOLLOWING.

55. ANGLE DOWN HALLWAY TOWARD STAIRS

Erich ENTERING FRAME.

ERICH
Annabelle!

Annabelle appears on the stairs, looking at him in surprise as she descends. Erich stops at the study door.

56. MED. SHOT ERICH

Seething with anger.

ERICH
Where is she?
Annabelle joins him.

ANNABELLE
She's still looking.

ERICH
I don't mean Christie.

ANNABELLE
We haven't found the doll, if that's what you mean.

ERICH
That's exactly what I mean. You knew I put it in the garbage can and—

ANNABELLE
(cutting in)
You what?

ERICH
—it isn't there now.

57. SHOT ANNABELLE Distressed.

ANNABELLE
Oh, Erich, how could you?

58. INT. STUDY ANGLE TO DOOR

Turning away from her, coming in, trying to control himself. She follows him.

ERICH
I'm tired of all this walkie-talkie nonsense. A joke's a joke, Annabelle, but you've carried it too far.

ANNABELLE
I?

ERICH
Please, don't make it any worse.

The CAMERA FOLLOWS him to the desk where he drops to his chair, furiously lighting a cigarette. Annabelle joins him, looking down at him uneasily.

ANNABELLE
(softly)
Erich, I didn't touch the doll. I haven't even seen it since dinner.
(beat)

I swear it.

Erich considers it. He frowns.

ERICH
You're telling the truth?
You didn't take it?

ANNABELLE
I didn't take it ... But I think it's dreadful, your putting it there.

ERICH
Then who ...?

ANNABELLE
I should have returned it.

ERICH (almost to himself)
Somebody must have come along and ...

He looks to her sharply, his face darkening.

ERICH
The phone call.

ANNABELLE
What phone call?

ERICH
You were on the extension. You said—

ANNABELLE
(bewildered)
What are you talking about?

ERICH
Didn't you do it?

ANNABELLE
(exasperated)
Do what?

59. ANOTHER ANGLE

Erich looking at her for a long moment, then getting up, for the first time considering that Annabelle might be telling the truth. He paces about thoughtfully, Annabelle watching him concernedly.

ERICH
No. Of course it couldn't have been you. How could you have made the telephone ring—

He stops to face her, saying thoughtfully:

ERICH
There are ways, of course.

But ...

ANNABELLE
(completely at sea)
Erich -

60. CLOSE SHOT ERICH

Thinking it out as he talks.

ERICH

The phone rang. I answered it. The doll's voice was loud and clear. It said, "My name is Talky Tina and I'm going to kill you."

61. MED. SHOT ANNABELLE

Taken back.

ANNABELLE
What?

ERICH

(joining her)

That's what it said.
(seeing her disbelief)
Would I lie?

ANNABELLE

(after a pause; worried)

Oh, Erich, I don't know what to say.

ERICH

Well, the doll's gone. Maybe things can settle down around here now.

ANNABELLE

Don't forget Christie.

ERICH

What about her?

ANNABELLE

How can you explain it to her?

ERICH

We'll buy another one. I'll talk to her. Is she upstairs?

ANNABELLE

Yes.

Erich starts off.

62. ANGLE DOWN UPSTAIRS HALLWAY

Erich reaching the top of the stairs.

ERICH

Christie?

**63. INT. CHRISTIE'S BEDROOM
ANGLE ON DOOR**

Erich reaches the door, looks in. He reacts, moves into CLOSE SHOT, looks down in shock.

64. P.O.V. SHOT CHRISTIE

Asleep in her bed, the doll at her side, Christie's arm draped over her. The doll's eyes are closed.

65. SHOT ERICH

Frowning, recovering.

ERICH

(softly)

Christie?

**66. TIGHT TWO SHOT
CHRISTIE AND DOLL**

The doll's eyes flip open, stare at Erich offscreen.

DOLL

I told you you'd be sorry.

67. ANGLE TO BED

Erich standing over it, flushing with new anger. He reaches over Christie to take the doll.

DOLL

Christie! Christie!

ERICH

Shut up!

He succeeds in removing the doll.

DOLL

Wake up, Christie!

Christie wakes up, sees Erich's wild state and the doll.

CHRISTIE

Daddy!

ERICH

Go back to sleep, Christie.

CHRISTIE

I want my Tina!

ERICH

I'm going to - borrow Tina for a while.

Christie senses his real intent, jerks to a sitting position.

CHRISTIE

Tina belongs to me!

Erich starts from the bed. Christie's face tenses; she starts to cry.

CHRISTIE

(a sob)

Daddy!

68. ANGLE TO DOOR

Erich reaching it just as Annabelle starts in. The SOUND of Christie CRYING is HEARD.

ANNABELLE

What's happening?

ERICH

I found the doll in her bed.

69. ANGLE TO BED

Annabelle moving to it, taking Christie in her arms.

ANNABELLE

It's all right, Christie. It's all right, honey.

CHRISTIE

I want Tina!

Annabelle casts a helpless look to Erich.

ANNABELLE

Erich ...

70. SHOT ERICH

He makes up his mind.

ERICH

No.

He turns and leaves the room.

**71. TWO SHOT CHRISTIE
AND ANNABELLE**

Annabelle holding the sobbing Christie.

ANNABELLE

There, there ...

**72. LOWER HALLWAY
ANGLE TO STAIRS**

Erich coming down purposefully, grimly, the doll under his arm.

Living Doll

73. EXT. HOUSE ANGLE TO BACK DOOR NIGHT

Erich comes out, turns on the patio lights, the area blossoming brightly. CAMERA FOLLOWS him to the hooded charcoal broiler.

74. CLOSE ON BROILER

Erich unceremoniously dumps the doll in among the ashes of previous charcoal fires. He reaches into his pocket for a lighter, brings it out, lights it. As soon as it comes near the doll's dress, it blows out. He tries it again. It will not light, though he flicks it several times.

75. ANGLE TO BACK DOOR

It opens, Annabelle coming out.

ANNABELLE

Erich?

76. MED. SHOT ERICH AT THE BROILER

Erich reaches to a nearby ledge shelf, glancing to Annabelle, who joins him. He takes down a box of wooden matches.

ANNABELLE

What are you doing?

ERICH

What I have to.

He strikes a match, holds the doll's clothes out to light them.

ANNABELLE

Erich! - No!

She moves to the broiler to pick up the doll. Erich stops her.

ERICH

Leave it alone!

Annabelle draws back, frightened by his zeal. Erich strikes another match. Annabelle turns away, moves off. Erich stands with the match, turning to watch her.

77. P.O.V. SHOT ANNABELLE

She moves into the house without a backward glance.

78. AT THE BROILER

The match burns his finger. He drops it, turns back, strikes another match, holding out the clothes. They will not burn. He frowns as he lights another match to try to ignite the doll. He still cannot make the doll's dress burn. He stares at the doll for a moment, then throws the box of matches back on the shelf, looks around angrily, spies a rack of knives, forks and other barbecue utensils. He takes the largest knife, moves to the doll, tests the cutting edge of the knife. Satisfied, he sets the knife edge on the doll's throat, commences sawing. Nothing happens. The knife will not cut. He lets out his breath in frustration, glares at the doll hatefully, looks toward the garbage can, picks up the doll roughly.

79. ANGLE TO BACK DOOR

Erich moving to a trash barrel beside the back door, picking out newspapers, a potato sack and rope. He takes this and a paper carton beside the barrel, moves off.

80. ANGLE TO PICNIC TABLE

Erich puts the doll on the picnic table, lays out the newspapers, wraps the doll quickly, inserts this into the sack, shoves the sack in the box, ties the rope around it, starts off with it.

81. ANGLE TO GARBAGE CAN

Erich reaches the garbage can, drops the box in, clamps down the lid, looks around, finds an unused concrete stepping stone, with effort manages to

get this on top of the lid. He stands back to observe his work.

ERICH

Now, let's see you get out of that.

He turns and moves to the back door, CAMERA FOLLOWING.

82. INT. BEDROOM FULL SHOT

Annabelle is emptying drawers of her belongings, putting them in a suitcase on the bed. A closet door stands open; some of the clothes are on the bed. Her movements are angry, determined.

83. ANGLE TO DOOR

Erich appears there, looks in, surprised.

ERICH

What are you doing?

He moves to her side, CAMERA FOLLOWING.

ANNABELLE

What does it look like?

ERICH

But why?

ANNABELLE

(pausing to look at him coldly)

Why? How could I live with you after what you've done?

ERICH

I had to do it - the doll -

ANNABELLE

You had to do it - to get revenge . . . just because I spent some of your precious money!

She turns away, but he reaches for her, turns her around.

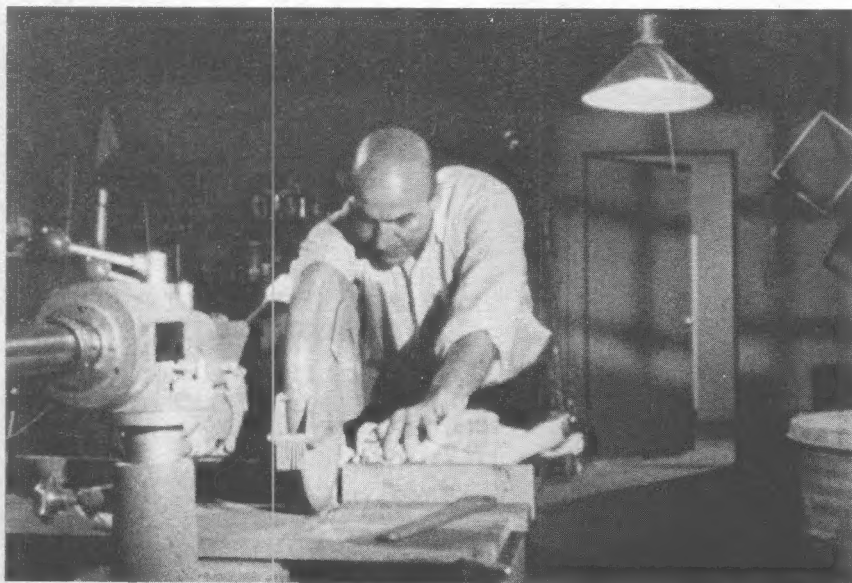
ERICH

(flaring)

Now listen, Annabelle. That doll talked to me. It said things no doll should say.

(beat)

Don't you see? I had to get rid of it.



ANNABELLE

You've become a stranger to me, Erich. A sick, neurotic stranger. And Christie—I don't want her hurt.

ERICH

You're taking Christie?

ANNABELLE

Of course.

(beat)

And you'd better see a good psychiatrist.

She resumes her packing.

84. SHOT ERICH

Sinking slowly to the bed, the implication clear, considering it miserably.

ERICH

(almost to himself)

I couldn't have imagined it.

85. ANGLE TO BED

Annabelle continuing her packing.

ANNABELLE

Tell him you burned a doll.

ERICH

(gloomily)

I didn't burn it.

ANNABELLE

(hesitating)

What did you do with it?

Erich gets up to face her,

CAMERA MOVING IN.

ERICH

I'll bring the doll in. I'll give it to Christie. Will that solve things?

ANNABELLE

It would be a start, Erich.

He turns, goes. Annabelle looks after him worriedly, sits on the bed.

86. EXT. HOUSE ANGLE TO DOOR NIGHT

Erich coming out, turning on the patio lights.

87. ANGLE TO GARBAGE CAN

Erich reaches it, lifts off the stone, removes the lid, takes out the box, slips off the rope, takes out the sack, depositing the box in the garbage can, then the sack, then the papers.

88. ANGLE TO BACK DOOR

Erich carries the doll in, turns off the lights.

89. ANGLE DOWN UPSTAIRS HALLWAY

Erich reaching the top of the stairs.

90. ANGLE PAST CHRISTIE AND ANNABELLE IN FOREGROUND

And TOWARD door. Christie, her face tear-stained, is in bed in her pajamas, Annabelle beside her. Erich appears in the doorway with the doll. He starts toward them.

CHRISTIE

Tina! Tina!

91. ANGLE TO BED

Christie holding out her arms for the doll, happy. Erich gives it to her, Annabelle watching. Christie embraces the doll.

CHRISTIE

Oh, Tina!

Annabelle gets up, moves to Erich's side, he takes her hand. They both look down at Christie, then at each other, smiling.

92. INT. BEDROOM FULL SHOT NIGHT

Annabelle is in one twin bed, Erich in the other. The room is lighted by what comes through the windows. Abruptly, Erich sits up.

93. ANGLE TO BEDS

Annabelle awakening, sitting up, looking to Erich, who sits in a listening attitude.

ANNABELLE

(softly)

What is it?

ERICH

I heard something.

He moves to swing his legs out, stands. Annabelle starts to get up.

ERICH

"No. You stay there.

She sinks back, frightened. Erich moves off.

94. ANGLE DOWN HALLWAY

Erich moving out into the

Living Doll



hallway, advancing TOWARD CAMERA stealthily. He stops at Christie's door.

95. INT. CHRISTIE'S BEDROOM CLOSE ON DOOR

It opens. Erich peers in. His eyes widen in surprise.

96. P.O.V. SHOT CHRISTIE

The doll is not beside her.

97. FULL SHOT BEDROOM

Erich moving quietly in looking around. He turns, starts out.

98. ANGLE DOWN HALLWAY

Erich coming out, closing the door softly. He starts TOWARD CAMERA.

99. CLOSE TRUCKING SHOT ERICH

Moving down the hall, turning to the stairs, stopping.

100. P.O.V. SHOT DOWNSTAIRS CORRIDOR

Illuminated by a nightlight. It is empty.

101. MED. CLOSE SHOT ERICH

Starting down the stairs.

102. ERICH'S FEET

Tripping over the doll.

103. ANGLE DOWN STAIRS

Erich falling down them, uttering a harsh scream.

104. AT THE BOTTOM OF THE STAIRS

Erich falling INTO FRAME.

105. FAST PAN SHOT THE DOLL

It follows him down the stairs, falling to lie beside him.

106. CLOSE SHOT ERICH'S FACE

Agonized, stunned, staring.

107. P.O.V. SHOT DOLL'S FACE

On the floor beside him, eyes open, mocking.

108. ANGLE TO ERICH

He slumps in death, his eyes

closing. Annabelle's offscreen SCREAM is HEARD. Lights go on.

109. ANGLE TO STAIRS

Annabelle rushing down.

ANNABELLE
Erich!

110. ANGLE PAST ERICH'S BODY IN FOREGROUND

And TOWARD the approaching Annabelle, who kneels down, her marrow freezing as she looks at him.

ANNABELLE
(a gasp)
Erich.

She reaches out a trembling hand to him, draws it back in shock when she hears:

DOLL'S VOICE

My name is Talky Tina ...
She looks toward the doll.

111. CLOSE SHOT DOLL'S FACE

DOLL

... and you'd better be nice to me.

112. CLOSE SHOT ANNABELLE

Eyes widening in fear, drawing back in horror, shaking her head as CAMERA DRAWS BACK to include doll.

SERLING

Of course, we all know dolls can't really talk, and they certainly can't commit murder. But to a child caught in the middle of turmoil and conflict, a doll can become many things: friend, defender, guardian. Especially a doll like Talky Tina, who did talk and did commit murder—in the misty region of the Twilight Zone.

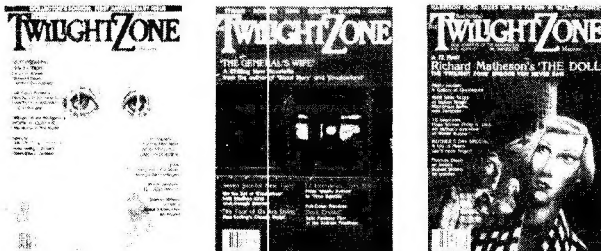
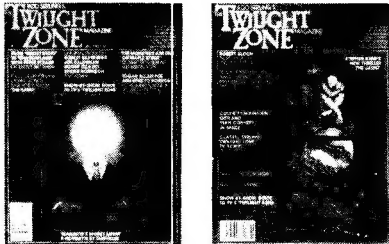
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TWILIGHT ZONE

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Original fiction by Robert Silverberg, Joe Haldeman, Roger Zelazny, Spider Robinson, & others; Peter Straub interview; Tanith Lee novelette; classic Serling script, *The Monsters Are Due on Maple Street*; *Show-by-Show* #2; preview of *The Hand*.

Stephen King's new thriller, *The Jaunt*; Robert Bloch interview; two long-lost tales by Anthony Boucher; classic TZ script, *The After Hours*; 100 Years of Fantasy Illustration; *Outland* preview; *Show-by-Show* #3.

A dozen new tales by Robert Silverberg, Robert Sheckley, Ron Goulart, Charles L. Grant, Stanley Schmidt, & others; *Superman's* Richard Donner on directing *The Twilight Zone*; Serling's tv chiller, *The Eye of the Beholder*; *Show-by-Show* #4.

Richard Matheson interview; new fiction by John Sladek, Gary Brandner, & Parke Godwin; tv history, *Forerunners of 'The Twilight Zone'*; Serling classic, *Time Enough at Last*; Dr. Van Helsing on fear of ghosts; *Show-by-Show* #6.

New tales by Tanith Lee, Thomas Disch, Ramsey Campbell, Stanley Schmidt, & Clark Howard; John Saul interview; TZ script, *Death's Head Revisited*; preview of *Halloween II*; Dr. Van Helsing on the joy of terror; *Show-by-Show* #8.

An outspoken interview with Harlan Ellison; *The Midnight Sun*, TZ classic script; M.R. James profile & James classic, *The Ash-Tree*; *Quest for Fire* preview; 8 new tales of humor & horror; *Show-by-Show* #9.

Rod Serling recalls *My Most Memorable Christmas*; Frank Belknap Long recalls H.P. Lovecraft; *Ghost Story* preview; fiction by Robert Sheckley, Reginald Bretnor, Parke Godwin, Connie Willis, & John Morressy; *The Night of the Meek*, Santa in TZ classic; LeFanu profile & classic tale; *Show-by-Show* #10.

Fritz Leiber interview, plus Leiber classic; 8 new tales by Ron Goulart, Robert Vardeman, & others; on the set of *The Thing*; preview of *Stab*, with Roy Scheider & Meryl Streep, Serling's *A Passage for Trumpet*; *Show-by-Show* #12.

Anniversary Special, with TZ's 3 story contest winners; Rod Serling's last interview; tales by Joan Aiken, Harlan Ellison, Ramsey Campbell, & George Alec Effinger; *Cat People* preview; William Hope Hodgson horror classic & profile; TZ cast party; *Show-by-Show* #13.

Peter Straub's new novelette, *The General's Wife*; Terry Gilliam interview; on the *Creepshow* set with Stephen King & George Romero; Serling's *The Four of Us Are Dying*, plus George Clayton Johnson's original story; 7 new tales by Connie Willis, Kit Reed, & others, *Dark Crystal* preview; Tierney's *Doomsday Poems*; *Show-by-Show* #14.

Richard Matheson's unseen TZ script, *The Doll*; Philip K. Dick interview; *Blade Runner* preview; *Fantasy in Clay* photo feature; 9 new tales by Pamela Sargent, Richard Christian Matheson, & others; *Show-by-Show* #15.

Stories by Robert Silverberg, Joan Aiken, & Joe Lansdale; Stephen King on films, Thomas Disch on books; Robertson Davies interview & story; *Ghostly Britain* photos; preview of *The Thing*; Serling's *100 Yards Over the Rim*; making *The Last Horror Film*; *Show-by-Show* #16.

Poe & Robert Bloch together in *The Lighthouse*; Douglas Heyes, TZ director, interviewed; funhouse photo-tour; 7 new stories; a look at *Tron*, *Poltergeist*, and *E.T.*; Serling's *The Trade-Ins*; *Show-by-Show* #17.

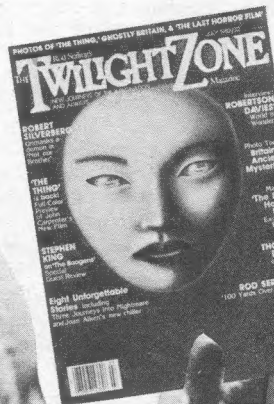
Long-lost Serling radio script; previews of *Creepshow* and *Something Wicked*; Paul Schrader interview; special Arthur Machen section; 7 new tales; new horror quiz; *Show-by-Show* #18.

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In January's TZ . . .



You'll find **more pages** than ever before—more fiction, more features, and more photos!

- **THE YEAR IN FILM:** A special full-color look back at this year's bumper crop of fantasy, horror, and science fiction films. Plus a highly opinionated selection of the Year's Best and the Year's Worst, from some very outspoken Twilight Zoners.
- **ROD SERLING'S LONG-LOST SPECIAL:** The controversial tv special *Carol for Another Christmas*, written by Rod Serling, starred Peter Sellers, Sterling Hayden, Ben Gazzara, Eva Marie Saint, Robert Shaw, and Britt Ekland. It aired once in 1964, then mysteriously disappeared. Feature writer Sam Frank has tracked down one of the few remaining prints—and the surprising story of why this unusual Yuletide drama was never seen again. A special report in January's TZ, with never-before-published photos.
- **LIVING DAHL:** Meet Roald Dahl, whose mordantly witty short stories carry a deadly sting in the tail. Lisa Tuttle journeyed to Dahl's home in rural Buckinghamshire for this colorful TZ Interview with one of modern horror's most fiendishly clever practitioners. Plus, Dahl's horrific classic, *Royal Jelly*.
- **CLASSIC:** Ed Wynn plays a sidewalk salesman who comes face to face with Mr. Death in Rod Serling's *One for the Angels*, a memorably moving *Twilight Zone* tv script, complete with photos

from the original show.

- **GAMESMANSHIP:** Roll the dice and you've slain a dragon. Roll them wrong and the dragon slays you. It's all part of the game for fantasy role-players—and game designer Lawrence Schick tells you how it works . . . with special attention to the new game for Lovecraft fans, *Call of Cthulhu*.
- **TWISTER:** People are strange and faces are twisted in the bizarrely menacing world of photographer Chris Hoffman. Reality goes surrealistic in a portfolio of Hoffman's weirdest work.
- **IMAGINATION UNLIMITED:** In *Recollections of Annie*, Charles L. Grant chronicles the battle of two women—one living, one dead—for the soul of a man they both love, and Joe R. Lansdale puts a monster on the psychiatric couch in *Personality Problem*. January's fiction lineup also includes a journey beyond the grave, an unsettling glimpse of insanity, a case of West Coast future shock, a modern-day whaling story (pro-whale, of course), and a surprise Christmas Eve visitor.
- **PLUS:** Thomas Disch on Christmas gift books . . . Gahan Wilson on futuristic films . . . bizarre cartoons . . . a horror quiz that'll make you gnaw your fingernails . . . and another chapter of Marc Scott Zicree's *Show-by-Show Guide to 'The Twilight Zone.'* It's all for you in January's TZ. Who could ask for anything more?